



This is a digital copy of a book that was preserved for generations on library shelves before it was carefully scanned by Google as part of a project to make the world's books discoverable online.

It has survived long enough for the copyright to expire and the book to enter the public domain. A public domain book is one that was never subject to copyright or whose legal copyright term has expired. Whether a book is in the public domain may vary country to country. Public domain books are our gateways to the past, representing a wealth of history, culture and knowledge that's often difficult to discover.

Marks, notations and other marginalia present in the original volume will appear in this file - a reminder of this book's long journey from the publisher to a library and finally to you.

Usage guidelines

Google is proud to partner with libraries to digitize public domain materials and make them widely accessible. Public domain books belong to the public and we are merely their custodians. Nevertheless, this work is expensive, so in order to keep providing this resource, we have taken steps to prevent abuse by commercial parties, including placing technical restrictions on automated querying.

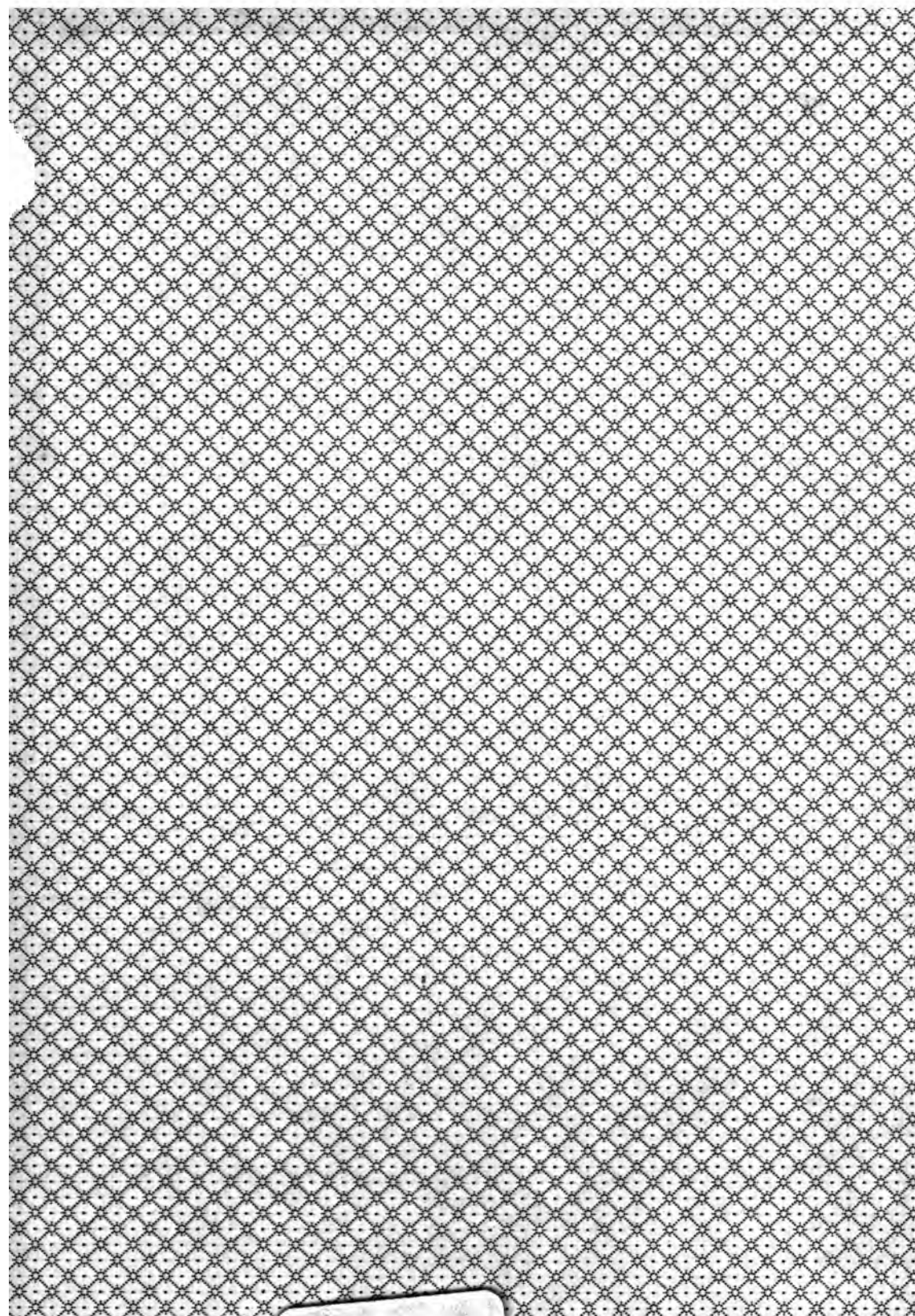
We also ask that you:

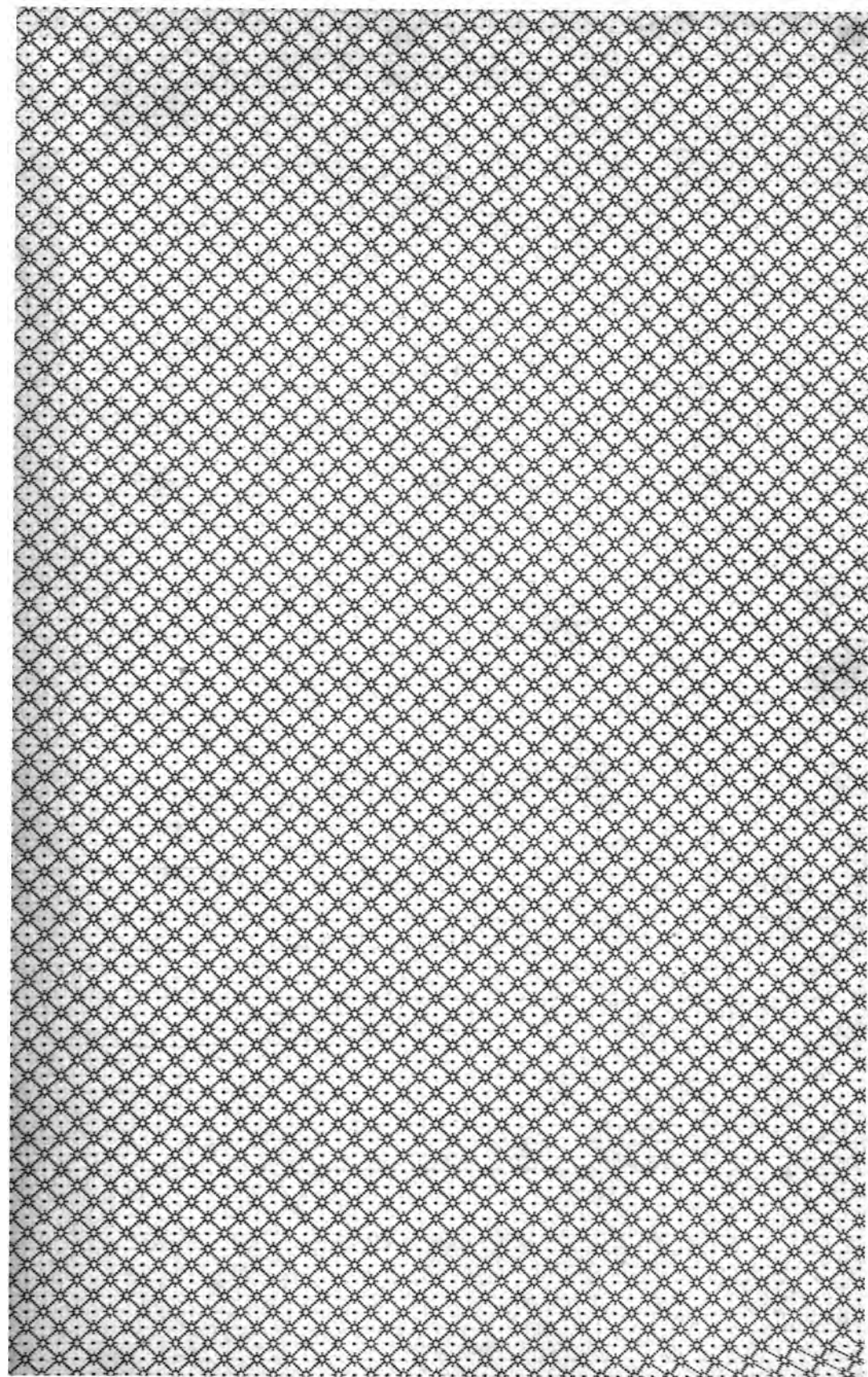
- + *Make non-commercial use of the files* We designed Google Book Search for use by individuals, and we request that you use these files for personal, non-commercial purposes.
- + *Refrain from automated querying* Do not send automated queries of any sort to Google's system: If you are conducting research on machine translation, optical character recognition or other areas where access to a large amount of text is helpful, please contact us. We encourage the use of public domain materials for these purposes and may be able to help.
- + *Maintain attribution* The Google "watermark" you see on each file is essential for informing people about this project and helping them find additional materials through Google Book Search. Please do not remove it.
- + *Keep it legal* Whatever your use, remember that you are responsible for ensuring that what you are doing is legal. Do not assume that just because we believe a book is in the public domain for users in the United States, that the work is also in the public domain for users in other countries. Whether a book is still in copyright varies from country to country, and we can't offer guidance on whether any specific use of any specific book is allowed. Please do not assume that a book's appearance in Google Book Search means it can be used in any manner anywhere in the world. Copyright infringement liability can be quite severe.

About Google Book Search

Google's mission is to organize the world's information and to make it universally accessible and useful. Google Book Search helps readers discover the world's books while helping authors and publishers reach new audiences. You can search through the full text of this book on the web at <http://books.google.com/>









600095669+



Keynard the Fox.

*London :—Printed by Richard Clay,
Bread Street Hill.*

Reynard the Fox

AFTER THE GERMAN VERSION OF

GOETHE.

BY

THOMAS JAMES ARNOLD, ESQ.

With ILLUSTRATIONS from the DESIGNS of

WILHELM VON KAULBACH.



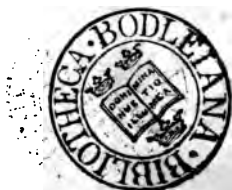
LONDON :

TRÜBNER AND CO., PATERNOSTER ROW.

NATTALI AND BOND, BEDFORD STREET.

1860.

285. h. 46.





Reynard the Fox

From the German Version of



Wellwishes may our
labour tell
That we have wished
to do it well.

Fair Jesters humour
and merry wit
Never offend though
smartly they hit.





P R E F A C E.

THE story of REYNARD THE Fox, here presented to the English public in the Translation of Mr. Arnold, is one which has been famous for centuries. The earliest edition known of this remarkable work is preserved in the Grenville Library at the British Museum, and is supposed to be a unique copy; it is a black letter octavo in Dutch, and was printed at Gouda, near Rotterdam, in 1479. Upon this work was based the translation of William Caxton, published in 1481. This first English REYNARD is also extremely rare, only three copies being known, of which two are in the British Museum; it is, however, easy of reference, having been reprinted by the Percy Society in 1844. The first German version was published at Lübeck in 1498, but the origin of the legend is much more remote, the poem having been known in Low German, French, and Latin, even in the twelfth century. At the present day, it is impossible to trace the authorship of the oldest version, referred by some to Willem die Matoc; but a *Reinhart Fuchs* is still preserved, dating about the middle of the thirteenth century, and it would seem that the earliest traces of the Poem must be sought in Flanders, where the nucleus of the series of adventures was formed. Henry

von Alkmar, who was in the service of the Duke of Lorraine, is stated, in the Preface to the Lübeck Edition, to be the first who translated the story from the Italian and French into German; but other authorities refer the authorship to a certain Nicholas Baumann, who died at Rostock in 1526, and the motive of his writing the Poem is stated to have been revenge for the persecution with which he was visited at the Court of Jülich. Yet the story was evidently not of his invention, therefore he must only be regarded as one of the numerous editors. Its earliest public seems to have been the same which received with avidity the Eulenspiegel legend, the Lay of the Niebelungen, the Ship of Fools of Sebastian Brandt, and similar productions—and in its general satiric views of mankind it belongs especially to the grotesque school which has given to Germany some of its most enduring fictions. Its celebrity, however, is European, and translated into almost every language, it has become a native of many lands.

Such a work, to be adequately represented to the present age, required the hand of a master who should unite with the grave wisdom of the acute and experienced man of the world, the happy and playful facility of the better kind of critic; such a combination presented itself in GÖTTE: such a book the product naturally to be expected. The enlarged views of later centuries blend most opportunely with the antique form, and under the veil of animals the symbolic representations of the diverse passions of men stand boldly in relief, creations as real as many passing forms which, like mirror-shadows, endure not.

This is, however, no place for entering upon the criticism of a poem like the Reynard of Gœthe, which was published in 1793, while the French Revolution was at its height, a biting commentary on that fearful time. Books of such significance

descend into the depths of the soul without the dead weight of the critic's laudation being attached to them.

One of the specialities of the present edition consists in the reproduction, for the first time in this country, of the wonderful engravings of Kaulbach, who seized upon the spirit of Gœthe's design, and assumed with a happy facility the mood, which, as by a witch's spell, transformed men into their brute synonyms. Reared into artistic power, under the careful eye of Cornelius, Wilhelm von Kaulbach has been one of the foremost men of Germany in art. At an early period he distinguished himself in sarcastic and humoresque drawing, and it would be curious to know whether the pictorial epic of Reynard was not an early conception in the artist's mind, cherished there as only true and wished for designs can be cherished, and executed in enthusiastic leisure.

The work, in its original quarto form, appeared in 1846, and has obtained for Kaulbach an ineffaceable reputation. So great was the popularity of that edition, that, in 1857, a reduction in the size of the engravings was made, and the Poem republished by Cotta. From this smaller book the present edition has originated. The designs have been faithfully transferred by English artists, and reproduced with every attention to detail and execution. Thus the reader will have, at a moderate price, a series of artistic productions, which, for a union of idealism and naturalism, have never been surpassed and rarely equalled. These varied and remarkable conceptions of Gœthe's poem vividly render the epic design of the author, and their singular fertility in detail evidences the closest study of animal habits, conjoined with the greatest attention to the leading purpose of satirising the peculiarities of society. No series of engravings could so adequately have fulfilled this object—the

thorough adaptation of homely and domestic furniture in the abode of Reynard is strangely, but most admirably contrasted by the magnificence which reigns in the leonine household, while in no case has Nature been wronged by a departure from the laws which govern brute forms and peculiarities.

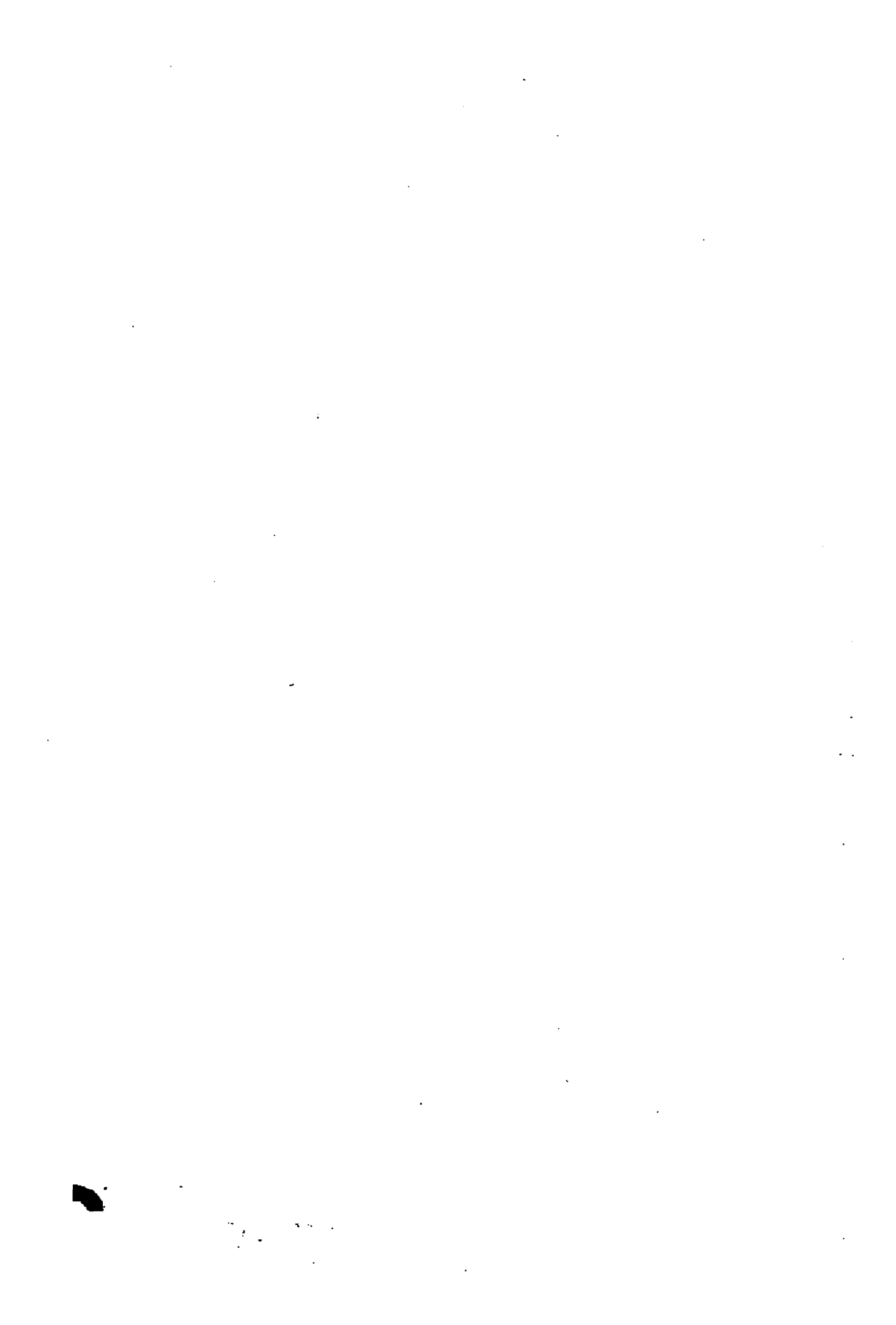
Not only in the REYNARD, however, has Kaulbach displayed his singular knowledge of animal forms, but the frescoes which adorn the staircase of the new Museum at Berlin are full of remarkable and playful ideas—here we may see the Badger teaching the boy architecture—there the Donkey waits to crown with laurel the impassioned poet, while the Elephant, in luxurious ease, sits gravely by. These frescoes are now in course of publication, as also another great work, the Shakspeare Gallery.

These words will, it is hoped, sufficiently explain to the reader the end and aim of the poet, and the truthfulness and genius of the artist.



CONTENTS.

CHAPTER	PAGE
I.— <i>The Accusation</i>	1
II.— <i>The First Summons</i>	20
III.— <i>The Second Summons</i>	36
IV.— <i>The Trial</i>	61
V.— <i>The Pardon</i>	75
VI.— <i>The Relapse</i>	91
VII.— <i>The Outlawry</i>	113
VIII.— <i>The Journey</i>	129
IX.— <i>The Advocacy</i>	144
X.— <i>The Second Pardon</i>	161
XI.— <i>The Defiance</i>	184
XII.— <i>The Battel</i>	206





REYNARD THE FOX.

CHAPTER THE FIRST.

The Accusation.

THE pleasant feast of Whitfuntide was come;
 The woods and hills were clad in vernal bloom;
 The full-awakened birds, from every tree,
 Made the air ring with cheerful melody;
 Sweet were the meadows after passing showers;
 Brilliant the heaven with light, the earth with flowers.

Noble, the King of Beasts, now holds his Court;
 Thither his summoned Vassals all resort;
 From North and South they troop, from East and West,
 Of Birds and Quadrupeds the First and Best.
 The Royal will had been proclaimed, that all
 Of ev'ry class should come, both Great and Small,
 To grace the pomp of that high festival:
 Not One should fail; and yet there did fail One;
 Reynard the Fox, the Rogue, was seen of none;
 His many crimes from Court kept him away;
 An evil conscience shuns the light of day.

Reynard the Fox.



To face that grave Assembly much he feared,
For all accused him; no one had he spared:
Greybeard, the Badger, stood his friend alone,
The Badger, who was Reynard's Brother's son.

Begirt with many a Relative and Friend,
Who aid in war, in peace might counsel lend,



Sir Ifegrim, the Wolf, approached the throne,
And with due rev'rence bowing humbly down,
His suit in plaintive accents he began,
And thus his wrathful accusation ran :—

“ Most gracious Lord and King! in pity hear!
Let my complaint find favour in Your ear.
Happy the subjects of Your glorious reign;
Here none who seek for justice seek in vain.
Vouchsafe, then, to commiserate my distress;
For Reynard's malice grant me some redress.
Me in all ways the Wretch hath wronged and shamed,
My Spouse dishonoured and my Children maimed;

Three lie at home, the youngest born of six,
 Befouled and blinded by his filthy tricks.

“ ’Tis long ago my plaint in Court was filed,
 Showing by Reynard how I’d been beguiled :
 The cunning Fox knew well a plea to draw,
 And boldly he presumed to wage his law :
 He dared not come at the appointed day ;
 So I had judgment—and my costs to pay.
 All present here can vouch this tale is true ;
 But none can tell such things as I can do.
 Had I the tongues of Angels, lungs of brags,
 Whole days and weeks—nay, months and years
 would pass

Ere I could mention all my injuries,
 Or tell one half his crimes and tricks and lies.
 If all the Sheep on earth were killed and flayed,
 And all their skins were into parchment made,
 Not half sufficient were they to contain,
 The wrongs whereof I justly could complain :
 The worst is the dishonour of my Wife ;
 That eats away my heart, and sours my life :
 Desire of vengeance haunts me, night and day,
 And vengeance I will have, come what come may.”

He ceased, and stood in silent mood apart,
 Gloom on his brow and anger in his heart.
 Up jumped a Poodle from a neighbouring bench,
 Hight Frizpate, who addressed the King in French.
 And he complained, it was not long ago,
 In winter, when the ground was deep in snow,
 That not a single Beast could hunt his prey,
 He’d given much in charity away,
 And for himself had but one sausage left ;
 By the false Fox of this he was bereft :
 A foul and almost sacrilegious theft !

Scant had he spoken, when with fiery eyes
Tybalt, the Cat, sprang forth in angry wife,
And kneeling cried—"My august and gracious King,
Reynard must answer many a grievous thing:
Most dreaded of all living Beasts is he;
Ay, more than e'en Your sacred Majesty.
Grant me Your patience, though; and hear me out:
Frizpate hath little to complain about:
The thing he speaks of happened years by-gone;
That sausage ne'er was his; it was my own,
My all, my only remaining sustenance;
I stumbled on it by the merest chance.
I happened once into a mill to creep;
It was deep night; the Miller fast asleep:
Being at that time stinted in my diet,
I took the sausage; why should I deny it?
But Frizpate filched it from me; so that he
Should be the last to speak of robbery."

The Panther then—"These jars are little use;
Reynard's misdeeds admit of no excuse:
He is a Robber and a Murderer;
That, in this Presence, boldly I aver.
No kind of crime but he doth exercise;
Nought sacred is there in his impious eyes:
His soul is fixed upon ungodly pelf;
Although the Nobles, nay, the King himself
Should suffer loss of health and wealth and all,
And the whole state to hopeless ruin fall,
So he could get the leg of a fat Capon, he
Would never care the value of a half-penny.

"Let me relate the trick he tried to play
To Pufs, the gentle Hare, but yesterday;—
Poor Pufs, who lives just like an Anchorite,
And never injured mortal Being yet.



Reynard, who latterly has given out
 That he has turned ascetic and devout,
 Promis'd he'd teach him at the quickest rate,
 How he, as Chaplain, might officiate;
 'The service you shall chant;' quoth he, 'as we do;
 And we'll begin our lesson with the *Credo* !'
 So down they sat together and began;
 For he had no misgivings, the good Man.
 But not long time continued they to sing;
 For, 'gainst the Peace of our dread Lord, the King,
 And setting at defiance all his laws,
 He seized on Pufs with his pernicious claws.

I heard their song as I was passing by,
And wondered that it stopped so suddenly;
I'd scarce proceeded though a dozen span, ere
I took the Felon Reynard with the mainour.
Fast hold had he of Puffy by the throat,
That he could scarce articulate one note.
Certes, at that time had I not come up,
He'd gone that night in Paradise to sup.
Yon stands our timid Friend; and in his flesh
You still may see his wounds all raw and fresh.

“Will not our Sov'reign Lord these ills abate?
Will you, brave Peers, and pillars of the State,
Such daily breaches of the peace permit,
Such violations of the Royal writ?
If there no stop be put to these foul crimes,
Much do I fear me, that in future times
Frequent reproach the King will have to hear
From all to whom Justice and Right are dear.”

Again spake Ifegrim; “’T is even so,
Reynard has ever been the common Foe;
’T were better he had perished long ago.
For while that wretch shall live, no rest will be
For honest, loyal, peaceful Folk, like me.
Albeit, according to the present fashion,
The Felon ever meets with most compassion;
If such crimes pass unpunished, not a year hence
We all shall rue our most unwise forbearance.”

Undaunted by this host of angry Foes,
The Badger, Reynard's Nephew, now arose;
Boldly prepared to plead his Uncle's cause,
All stained with crime and falsehood as he was.

“Now fair and soft, Sir Ifegrim,” said he;
“Your words smack less of truth than enmity.
’T is known you hate my Uncle; and, in sooth,

A fair word had he ne'er from your foul mouth.
 Yet from your malice hath he nought to fear:
 In the King's favour stood he now but here,
 He'd give you ample reason to repent
 Stirring in these stale subjects of complaint.
 You take good care too not to say one word
 Of ills that he for your sake hath incurred.
 Yet many of the Barons here well know
 What happened not so very long ago;
 When you and he a solemn covenant sware,
 That friendship Each should to the Other bear,
 And, like true Comrades, Good and Evil share. }
 I must relate, it is not long to tell,
 The strange adventure which that time befell,
 When you and he, in the cold winter weather,
 Went through the country travelling together.

"It chanced a Carter, on the King's high road,
 Was driving homeward with a heavy load;
 Your subtle nostrils soon sniffed out 't was fish,
 You'd soon have had them if you'd had your wish:
 But they were closely packed; and what was worse,
 You'd not a single stiver in your purse.
 What then did my kind-hearted Uncle do?
 Ah! what indeed hath he not done for you?
 Down in the road he laid himself for dead:
 'Twas a bold thought to come into his head!
 And when the Carter saw him lying there,
 To kill him out-an-end did he prepare;
 But, cunning Reynard still held in his breath,
 Stiff'ning his limbs and counterfeiting death;
 'Twas a consummate masterpiece of art,
 That showed him cool of head as brave of heart; }
 The Carter picked him up, and pitched him in his
 cart.

A cap he thought to make out of his skin,
And a bag too to keep his dollars in.
This did my Uncle do for Ifegrim :
When would he venture such a risk for him ?
While onward went the Carter with his load,
Reynard kept throwing fish down in the road ;
And Ifegrim, who was in haste to sup,
Fast as he threw them down, gobbled them up.
Reynard grew weary of this sport at last,
And thought 'twas his turn now to break his fast ;
So down he sprang ; but with disgust and wonder
Found Ifegrim had pilfered all the plunder :
He'd stuffed till he was nigh to burst in funder. }
He told my Uncle he had left his share—
But nothing but the heads and bones were there.

“ Another of his tricks I must narrate ;
And so Heav'n help me, as I truth relate.
A Countryman had lately killed a Swine ;
Large were its hams and noble was its chine.
Reynard had found out where the carcase hung,
And told it Ifegrim with truthful tongue.
And they agreed in common they would toil,
Would share the danger and divide the spoil :
To Reynard's share the danger fell alone ;
But of the spoil, forsooth, he'd next to none.
The larder-walls were strong and steep and high ;
My Uncle clomb them, though, right skilfully ;
True to his word, did he the Porker throw
Out of the window to the Wolf below.
Now, by bad fortune, there were in the grounds
A couple of most ill-conditioned Hounds ;
They chased my Uncle with appalling din ;
He got away, but not with a whole skin :
And straight unto the Wolf his way did make,

To show what he had suffered for his sake,
 And claim his lawful share ; then Ifegrim
 Said he'd reserved the prime tit-bit for him ;
 And thrusting in his cheek his lying tongue,
 Produced the hook by which the Pig had hung.
 His feelings Reynard had no words t'express,
 But what he felt all present here may guess.

" Scores of such pranks I might remember well,
 Were you inclined to hear, and I to tell :
 But 'tis enough : were Reynard summoned here,
 Soon would he make his innocence appear.

" As for the other charge, 'tis most absurd ;
 You, my dread Liege, and you, my Lords, have heard
 What Ifegrim has said about his Wife,
 Whom 'twas his duty to protect with life.
 In all its details that affair I know ;
 It happened now just seven years ago,
 That Reynard's bosom first received a wound
 From the soft eyes of Lady Gieremund.
 My Uncle is not to be blamed at all :
 They met together at a fancy ball :
 If'grim had gone upon a tour to Rome :
 Husbands, if wife, would always stay at home.
 My Uncle proffered her his faith and troth ;
 She sanctioned his attentions, nothing loth.
 Is it not, therefore, a most crying shame,
 That her own Lord should fally her fair fame ?
 What any Man of honour would conceal,
 He seems to take a pleasure to reveal.

" What have we next ? This trumpery affair,
 The Panther has brought up about the Hare.
 Such utter trash ! what ! shall a Master scruple
 To chastise a perverse or sluggish Pupil ?
 If this be so, how are our Youth to be

Trained up in learning and morality?
The wisest book that ever was compiled
Says, if you spare the rod you spoil the child.

“ Then we have Mounfeer Frizpate, who complains
He was deprived of his ill-gotten gains.
À pretty fufs, forsooth, about a fausage!
'Twere better he said nothing of that passage.
For it turns out 'twas stolen; and the Thief
Has the assurance now to ask relief.
The Evil on his own head has recoiled:
'Tis only just the Spoiler should be spoiled.
Is Reynard blamed, that from a Robber he
Has wrung the fruits of his dishonesty?
He did his duty, that deny who can,
Like a true Fox and loyal Gentleman.
Why, had he hanged him on the spot, I ween,
He must assuredly have pardoned been:
But he respects the King's Prerogative,
And therefore spared the Thief and let him live.

“ But little justice can my Uncle get;
At least, but little hath he got as yet;
Since the King's Peace was publicly made known,
No one hath led the life that he hath done,
With books he passes half his time away,
And takes but one abstemious meal a day.
Water his only drink, and roots his food;
Poultry and butchers' meat he hath eschew'd,
And cannot bear the very thought of blood;
With whips doth mortify his flesh, and wear
Next to his very skin a shirt of hair.
I heard it mentioned only yesterday,
By one who happened to have passed that way;
His castle, Malepartus, he hath shut,
And in the desert built a Hermit's hut.

So lean and pale and haggard he hath grown,
 By his best Friends he scarcely would be known.
 But 'tis the burden of a good old song,
 That absent Folks are ever in the wrong.
 I only wish to Heav'n that he were here;
 From all these scandals he would soon be clear."

Scarce had he ceased, when from a neighb'ring hill
 A cry resounded, like a clarion shrill.
 The voice it was of honest Chanticleer,
 Who with his Wives and Concubines drew near;
 A dead Hen borne behind him on a bier. }

It was the headless corpse of young Greyleg,
 As good a Fowl as ever laid an egg;
 His fav'rite Daughter of a num'rous brood;
 And impious Reynard now had shed her blood.

Foremost the sad and mourning Sire doth stride,
 His dappled wings low trailing by his side;
 While after him two youthful Cock'rells march,
 Each bearing in his grasp a burning torch;
 Cantart of one, Cryart the other's name;
 'Twixt France and Holland none more known to fame; }
 They were the Brothers of the murdered Dame.
 Four tender Pullets bore their Mother's bier,
 Clucking so loud 'twas pitiful to hear;
 Dire was the clatter, awful were the cries,
 And the shrill clamor pierced the startled skies.

Soon as the Heralds silence had restor'd,
 Unto the throne stepped up the martial Bird;
 O'erwhelm'd with woe he thrice essayed to speak,
 And thrice the words died choking in his beak.
 Ashamed so chicken-hearted to appear,
 He gave one vig'rous crow his voice to clear,
 And thus began:—"My Liege and Sov'reign, hail!
 With pity listen to my grievous tale;

The Accusation.



Before You stands the wretchedest of Cocks,
A hapless Victim of that cruel Fox.

“Whenas stern Winter fled on stormy wing,
And the glad Earth welcomed the cheery Spring,
How pleased was my paternal heart and proud,
As I surveyed my young and hopeful Brood:
Ten gallant Sons and fourteen Daughters fair
Partlett had hatched me, with parental care ;

Partlett, the best and most submissive Wife
 That ever solaced a poor Husband's life.
 How joyed was I with her and them to rove,
 And watch my Offspring full of life and love.
 That time no terrors for their lot I felt,
 For in complete security we dwelt:
 Our home was in a convent's spacious yard,
 Whose lofty walls its inmates safely guard;
 And six stout Dogs belonging to the farm,
 Who loved us well, protected us from harm.

“Reynard, it seems, that lawless Reprobate,
 Like Satan, envying our happy state,
 Around our Eden often lay in wait.
 Stealthily round the walls by night he'd creep,
 And through the crannies of the gates would peep.
 The trusty Guardians of myself and Wife
 Oft made the Russian scamper for dear life;
 Once they did catch him, and well tanned his hide,
 He got away, though sorely scarified;
 And for a good while after let us bide.”

“But ah, Sire! now begins my tale of woe:
 Again he came, and that not long ago;
 Within our convent walls he slyly slunk
 Clad in the vestments of a holy Monk,
 Wore a long frock, and sandals 'stead of shoes,
 And looked for all the world like a Recluse.
 He brought a Writ; 'twas sealed with the Great Seal;
 'Twas genuine; I know the impress well:
 This Writ proclaimed, in unambiguous words,
 Peace should be kept between all Beasts and Birds.
 As for himself, he'd vowed his ways to mend,
 And think of nothing but his latter end;
 He'd quite reform'd, he said, his mode of life,
 Had e'en forsworn the embraces of his Wife;



Water his only drink and roots his food;
All flesh of every kind he had eschew'd,
And could not bear the very thought of blood.
But that my Wife and Daughters present were,
He said he would have shown the shirt of hair,
Which he for penance next his skin must wear:
And, on the word and honour of a Fowl,
I myself saw the tonsure 'neath his cowl.
Tow'rds him I own I felt my heart relent,
He seem'd so really, truly penitent;
He spoke of his past sins with such compunction,

And of the Heav'nly grace with so much unction.
 'Farewell!' at length he cried, 'I needs must go;
 'I still have many pious deeds to do;
 'I have the Nones and Vespers yet to say,
 'And by a dying Vulture's bed to pray;
 'He too was a sad Sinner in his day. }
 'Bless you, my Children, may you ever thrive
 'In the calm peace which this World cannot give.'
 And saying thus, the odious Hypocrite
 Crossing himself departed from our sight.
 He left us, all his soul on mischief bent;
 While ours were filled with happiest content.

"We ventured forth; and habit, more than fear,
 Kept us at first to the old convent near.
 Reynard we daily saw near our abode;
 It seem'd some business led him oft that road;
 His looks were ever bent upon the ground,
 As though his mind were lost in thought profound;
 Or, if he chanced our family to see,
 It was 'Good'en' and 'Benedicite';
 And he would tell his beads and seem to pray,
 And smite his breast, and so pass on his way.

"Now, bolder grown, we further went abroad,
 In search of pleasure and our daily food.
 Ah! fatal error! from behind a bush
 Reynard among us made a sudden rush.
 Scatt'ring and squand'ring to the left and right,
 Tow'rd's our old home we took our screaming flight,
 In vain, alas! our Foe was there before;
 In threat'ning guise he barred us from the door:
 With furer aim this time he bore away
 Of all my Sons the fairest as his prey:
 And I was there, and impotent to save!
 My Son! my Son! my Beautiful, my Brave!

“ And now he once had tasted of our blood,
It seemed as he disdained all other food :
At all times came he on us—night and day—
Nor Dogs, nor Men, nor gates, kept him away.
Of all mine Offspring I’m well nigh bereft ;
Five, out of twenty, all that now are left :
With grief and terror I am all but wild ;
Soon will he leave me neither Chick nor Child.
Oh, give me justice ! ’twas but yesterday
He tore my Daughter from my side away ;
Villain ! without or pity or remorse :
The Dogs were but in time to save her corse.
See, there she lies ! my Child whom Reynard flew !
Help me, or he will have the Others too !
Oh ! Cock-a-doodle, cock-a-doodle doo !”

Fierce was the fire that in the King’s eye burned,
As to the Badger wrathfully he turned,
And thus began ; “ Come hither, Sir, and see
This sample of your Uncle’s piety !
Now by my royal mane I make a vow,
This Miscreant shall not pass unpunish’d so,
If Heav’n preserve my life another year.
But words avail not. Honest Chanticleer,
I claim the right your inj’ries to redress,
To share, if not to lessen, your distress.
Entombed shall your fair Daughter be, with all
The pomp befits a royal funeral :
A Vigil shall be sung, a Mass be said,
The more to honour the illustrious Dead :
We with our Council will the while take thought
How may the Murd’rer be to justice brought.”

In fable was the Chapel Royal hung ;
The Mass was duly said, the Vigil sung :
The People, joining with the Quiristers,

Sang *Domino placebo*, verse by verse.

I could relate who gave each versicle,

Who the responses; but 'twere long to tell; }

And so I pass it by: 'tis just as well.

Deep in a grave they laid the honor'd Dead,

And placed a marble tablet at her head;

'Twas thick, and square, and polished bright as glass,

With this inscription graven on its face:

GREYLEG THE SPECKLED ONE LIES BURIED HERE
THE DEAR-LOVED DAUGHTER OF BRAVE CHANTICLEER
THROUGHOUT THE EARTH 'TWERE VAIN TO SEEK HER MATCH
NO HEN COULD OFT'NER LAY OR FEATLIER SCRATCH
IN REYNARD'S CLUTCH SHE DREW HER LATEST BREATH
AND PASSED UNTIMELY TO THE REALMS OF DEATH
LET ALL GOOD MEN HER MURD'RER EXECRATE
AND SHED A TEAR OF PITY FOR HER FATE

Meanwhile the King in solemn Council fate,

Discussing with the Wifest in his state,

How they the Culprit might to Justice draw

And vindicate the majesty of Law.

At length it was resolved, by one and all,

To send a summons to the Criminal,

Commanding him, all bus'ness laid aside,

He should to Court repair, and there his doom abide.

The summons writ and sealed, Bruin, the Bear,

Selected they to be the Messenger;

And him the King addressed; "Sir Bruin, see

That you perform your mission faithfully.

We know you stout of limb and brave of heart; }

Yet would We counsel caution on your part; }

Courage is oft but a poor match for art.

Reynard, remember, speaks but to deceive; }

Neither his lies nor flattery believe, }

Or you may soon have too good cause to grieve."

“ Fear not, my Liege,” the trusty Bear replied,
Confident in his strength and shaggy hide ;
“ Reynard, however tricky he may be,
Will not, I wager, try his tricks on me.
Me or my mission an he treat with scorn,
I’ll make him rue the hour that he was born.”





CHAPTER THE SECOND.

The First Summons.

NOW with his ragged staff the Bear set forth,
And with his best grease larded the lean earth.
Through forests vast he went and deserts drear;
But his bold heart knew neither doubt nor fear.
At length the mountain region he approached,
Wherein Sir Reynard generally poached:
But Bruin would not tarry or delay;
Tow'rds Malepartus held he on his way,
The fav'rite fastness of the Robber Chief;
And there he hoped to catch the wily Thief:
Thither for safety usually he fled,
When threat'ning danger overhung his head.

At length Sir Bruin stood before the gate,
And, finding it was shut, he scratched his pate,
Not knowing whether best to go or wait. }
Then he began to cry, with mighty din;
"What, cousin Reynard, ho! are you within?
Bruin the Bear it is who calls. I bring
A missive from our Sovereign Lord, the King:



He orders you, all bus'ness laid aside,
Repair to Court and there your doom abide;
That equal right and justice may be done,
And satisfaction giv'n to every one.
I am to fetch you: if you hesitate,
The gallows or the wheel will be your fate.
Better to come at once, fair cousin, sith
The King, you know, will not be trifled with."

Reynard, from the beginning to the end,
Had heard this summons; and did now perpend
In what way he might punish his fat Friend.

Into a private corner he had fled,
Where he could hear securely all was said.
His keep was built with many a secret door,
With traps above and pits beneath the floor;
With labyrinthine passages and channels,
With secret chambers and with sliding panels.
There he would often hide, the cunning Hound,
When he was wanted, and would not be found.
Amid this intricate obscurity,
Where none could safely find his path but he,
Full many a simple Beast had lost his way,
And to the wily Robber fall'n a prey.

Reynard suspected there might be some cheat;
For the Deceitful always fear deceit.
Was Bruin quite alone? He felt afraid,
There might be others hid in ambushade.
But soon as he was fully satisfied
His fears were vain, forth from the door he hied;
And, "Welcome, dearest Uncle, here;" quoth he,
With studied look of deep humility,
And the most jesuitical of whispers,
"I heard you call; but I was reading Vespers.
I am quite grieved you should have had to wait,
In this cold wind too, standing at my gate.
How glad I am you're come; for I feel sure
With your kind aid, my cause will be secure;
However that may be, at least, I know
More welcome nobody could be than you.
But truly 'twas a pity I must say
I have sent you such a long and tedious way.
Good Heav'ns! how hot you are! you're tired to
death!

How wet your hair is, and how scant your breath!
Although no slight our good King could have meant,

Some other Messenger he might have sent
Than Bruin, the chief glory of his Court,
His kingdom's main adornment and support.
Though I should be the last to blame his choice,
Who have, in sooth, no cause but to rejoice.
How I am slandered well aware am I,
But on your love of Justice I rely,
That you will speak of things just as you find them;
As to my Enemies I need not mind them:
Their malice vainly shall my cause assail;
For Truth, we know, is great, and must prevail.

"To Court to-morrow we will take our way:
I should myself prefer to start to-day,
Not having cause—why should I have?—to hide;
But I am rather bad in my inside.
By what I've eaten I am quite upset,
And nowise fitted for a journey yet."

"What was it?" asked Sir Bruin, quite prepar'd,
For Reynard had not thrown him off his guard.

"Ah!" quoth the Fox, "what boots it to explain?
E'en your kind pity could not ease my pain.
Since flesh I have abjured, for my soul's weal,
I'm often sadly put to't for a meal.
I bear my wretched life as best I can;
A Hermit fares not like an Alderman.
But yesterday, as other viands failed,
I ate some honey,—see how I am swelled!
Of that there's always to be had enough:
Would I had never touch'd the curfed stuff.
I ate it out of sheer necessity;
Phyfic is not so nauseous near to me."

"Honey!" exclaimed the Bear; "did you say honey?
Would I could any get for love or money!
How can you speak so ill of what's so good?"

Honey has ever been my fav'rite food;
 It is so wholesome, and so sweet and luscious;
 I can't conceive how you can call it nauseous.
 Do get me some on't; and you may depend
 You'll make me evermore your steadfast friend."

"You're surely joking, Uncle!" Reynard cried;

"No, on my sacred word!" the Bear replied;

"I'd not, though jokes as blackberries were ripe,
 Joke upon such a subject for my life."

"Well! you surprise me;" said the knavish Beast;

"There's no accounting certainly for taste;
 And one Man's meat is oft Another's poison.
 I'll wager that you never set your eyes on
 Such store of honey as you soon shall spy
 At Gaffer Joiner's, who lives here hard by."

In fancy o'er the treat did Bruin gloat;
 While his mouth fairly watered at the thought.

"Oh, take me, take me there, dear Coz," quoth he,

"And I will ne'er forget your courtesy.

Oh, let me have a taste, if not my fill:

Do, Cousin." Reynard grinned, and said, "I will.

Honey you shall not long time be without:

'Tis true just now I'm rather sore of foot;

But what of that? the love I bear to you

Shall make the road seem short and easy too.

Not one of all my kith or kin is there

Whom I so honour as th' illustrious Bear.

Come then! and in return I know you'll say

A good word for me on the Council-day.

You shall have honey to your heart's content,

And wax too, if your fancy's that way bent."

Whacks of a different sort the sly Rogue meant. }

Off starts the wily Fox, in merry trim,
 And Bruin blindly follows after him.

‘ If you have luck,’ thought Reynard, with a titter,
‘ I guess you’ll find our honey rather bitter.’

When they at length reached Goodman Joiner’s yard,
The joy that Bruin felt he might have spar’d.
But Hope, it seems, by some eternal rule,
Beguiles the Wifest as the merest Fool.

’Twas ev’ning now, and Reynard knew, he said,
The Goodman would be safe and sound in bed.
A good and skilful Carpenter was he :
Within his yard there lay an old oak tree,
Whose gnarled and knotted trunk he had to split ;
A stout wedge had he driven into it :
The cleft gaped open a good three foot wide ;
Towards this spot the crafty Reynard hied ;
“ Uncle,” quoth he, “ your steps this way direct
You’ll find more honey here than you suspect.
In at this fissure boldly thrust your pate ;
But I beseech you to be moderate :
Remember, sweetest things the soonest cloy,
And Temperance enhances every joy.”

“ What ! ” said the Bear, a shock’d look as he put on
Of self-restraint ; “ d’ye take me for a Glutton ?
With thanks I use the gifts of Providence,
But to abuse them count a grave offence.”

And so Sir Bruin let himself be fooled :
As Strength will be whene’er by Craft ’tis ruled.
Into the cleft he thrust his greedy maw
Up to the ears, and either foremost paw.
Reynard drew near ; and tugging might and main
Pull’d forth the wedge ; and the trunk closed again.
By head and foot was Bruin firmly caught :
Nor threats nor flatt’ry could avail him aught.
He howled, he raved, he struggled and he tore,
Till the whole place re-echoed with his roar ;

. *Reynard the Fox.*



And Goodman Joiner, wakened by the rout,
Jumped up much wond'ring what 'twas all about ;
And seized his axe, that he might be prepar'd,
And danger, if it came, might find him on his guard.
Still howled the Bear and struggled to get free
From the accursed grip of that cleft tree.

He strove and strained ; but strained and strove in vain, }
His mightiest efforts but increased his pain : }
He thought he never should get loose again. }
And Reynard thought the same, for his own part ;
And wished it too, devoutly from his heart.
And as the Joiner coming he espied,
Armed with his axe, the jesting Ruffian cried ;

“ Uncle, what cheer ? Is th’ honey to your taste ?
Don’t eat too quick, there’s no such need of haste.
The Joiner’s coming ; and I make no question,
He brings you your desert, to help digestion.”

Then deeming ’twas not longer safe to stay,
To Malepartus back he took his way.

The Joiner, when he came and saw the Bear ;
Off to the ale-house did with speed repair,
Where oft the Villagers would sit and swill ;
And a good many fat carousing still.

“ Neighbours,” quoth he, “ be quick ! In my
court-yard

A Bear is trapped ; come, and come well prepar’d :
I vow, ’tis true.” Up started every Man,
And pell-mell, helter-skelter off they ran ;
Seizing whatever handiest they could take,
A pitch-fork One, Another grasps a rake,
A Third a flail ; and arm’d was ev’ry one
With some chance weapon, stick or stake or stone.
The Priest and Sacristan both joined the throng,
A mattock this, the other bore a prong.
The Parson’s Maid came too ; (Judith her name,
And fair was she of face and fair of fame ;
His Rev’rence could not live without her aid ;
She cooked his victuals, and she warmed his bed.)
She brought the distaff she had used all day,
With which she hoped the luckless Bear to pay.

Bruin with terror heard th' approaching roar,
And with fresh desperation tugged and tore :
His head he thus got free from out the cleft :
But hide and hair, alack ! behind he left ;
While from the hideous wound the crimson blood
Adown his breast in copious currents flow'd.
Was never seen so pitiable a Beast !
It help him nought his head to have releaf'd :
His feet still being fastened in the tree,
These with one more huge effort he set free.
But than his head no better fared his paws ;
For he rent off alike the skin and claws.
This was in sooth a different sort of treat
From what he had expected there to meet ;
He wished to Heav'n he ne'er had ventured there :
It was a most unfortunate affair !

Bleeding upon the ground he could but sprawl,
For he could neither stand, nor walk, nor crawl.
The Joiner now came up with all his Crew :
To the attack with eager souls they flew ;
With thwacks and thumps belabouring the poor Wight ;
They hoped to slay him on the spot outright.
The Priest kept poking at him with his prong,
From afar off—the handle being long.
Bruin in anguish rolled and writhed about ;
Each howl of his called forth an answering shout.
On every side his furious Foemen swarmed,
With spits and spades, with hoes and hatchets armed ;
Weapons all wielded too by nerves of pith :
His large sledge-hammer bore the finewy Smith.
They struck, they yelled, they pelted and they hallooed ;
While in a pool of filth poor Bruin wallowed.

To name these Heroes were too long by half :
There was the long-nosed Jem, the bandy Ralph ;

These were the worst ; but crooked-fingered Jack,
With his flail fetched him many a grievous thwack :
His Step-brother, hight Cuckelfon the Fat,
Stood, but aloof, with an enormous bat :
Dame Judith was not idle with her distaff :
While Gaffer Grumble stirr'd him up with his staff ;
And Men and Women many more were there,
All vowing vengeance 'gainst th' unhappy Bear.

The foremost—in the noise—was Cuckelfon :
He boasted that he was Dame Gertrude's Son ;
And all the World believed that this was true ;
But who his Father, no one ever knew.
Fame indeed said—but Fame is such a Liar,
That Brother Joseph, the Franciscan Friar,
Might, if he chose, claim the paternity ;
Or share the fame with Others, it might be.

Now stones and brick-bats from all sides were
shower'd ;
And Bruin, tho' he scorned to die a Coward,
Was by opposing numbers all but overpower'd. }
The Joiner's Brother then, whose name was Scrub,
Whirling around his head a massive club,
Rushed in the midst, with execrations horrid,
And dealt the Bear a blow plump on the forehead.
That blow was struck with such tremendous might,
Bruin lost both his hearing and his sight.
One desp'rate plunge he made though, and as luck
Would have it, 'mong the Women ran a-muck.
Ye Saints ! how they did scream and shriek and squall !
Over each other how they tumbled all !
And some fell in the stream that ran hard by,
And it was deep just there, unluckily.
The pastor cried aloud—" Look, neighbours, look !
See, yonder—in the water—Jude, my Cook ;

With all her wool—she's left her distaff here,
Help! save her! you shall have a cask of beer;
As well as absolution for past crimes,
And full indulgence for all future times."

Fired with the promised boon, they left the Bear,
Who lay half dead, all stunned and stupid there;
Plunged to the Women's rescue; fished out five;
All that had fallen in, and all alive.

The miserable Bear, while thus his Foes
Were busied, finding respite from their blows;
Managed to scramble to the river's brim;
And in he rolled; but not with hopes to swim;
For life a very burden was to him: }
Those shameful blows no more he could abide;
They pierced his soul more than they pained his hide.
He wished to end his days in that deep water,
Nor feared t' incur the perils of self-slaughter.
But no! against his will he floated down;
It seemed in truth he was not born to drown.

Now when the Bear's escape the Men descried,
"Oh shame! insufferable shame!" they cried;
Then in a rage began to rate the Women;
"See where the Bear away from us is swimming;
Had you but stayed at home, your proper place,
We should not have encountered this disgrace."

Then to the cleft tree turning, they found there
The bleeding strips of Bruin's hide and hair;
At this into loud laughter they broke out,
And after him thus sent a jeering shout;
"You'll sure come back again, old Devil-spawn,
As you have left your wig and gloves in pawn."

Thus insult added they to injury,
And Bruin heard them and sore hurt was he;
He cursed them all, and his own wretched fate;

He curfed the Honey that had been his bait;
He curfed the Fox who led him in the Snare;
He even curfed the King who fent him there.

Such were his pray'rs as quick he swept along,
For the fream bore him onward, fwift and ftrong;
So, without effort, in a little while,
He floated down the river near a mile.
Then with a heavy heart he crawled on fhore,
For he was wet and weary, fick and fore.
The Sun throughout his courfe would never fee
A Beaft in fuch a fhocking plight as he.
Hard and with pain he fetched his lab'ring breath,
And every moment looked and wifhed for death.
His head fwam round with a ftrange fort of dizzinefs,
As he thought o'er the whole perplexing bufinefs.

"Oh, Reynard!" he gasped out, "Thou Traitor vile!
Oh, Scoundrel, Thief!" and more in the fame ftyle.
He thought upon the tree; the jibes and knocks
He had endured; and once more curfed the Fox.

Reynard well pleafed t' have cozened Uncle Bruin,
And lured him, as he thought, to his fure ruin,
Had ftrted off upon a Chicken-chafe;
He knew, clofe by, a tried and fav'rite place.
A fine fat Pullet foon became his prey,
Which in his felon clutch he bore away:
This he devoured, bones and all, right speedily;
And, if the truth be fpoken, fomewhat greedily.
Prepared for any chance that might betide,
He flowly fauntered by the river fide;
Stopping from time to time to take a draught;
And thought aloud, while in his fleeve he laugh'd:

"How pleafed I am t' have trick'd that ftupid Bear!
Honey he longed for, and has had his fhare;
I'm not to blame; I warned him of the *wax*:"

By this he knows how tastes a Joiner's axe.
I'm glad to have shown him this good turn, as he
Has ever been so good and kind to me.
Poor Uncle! well; by chance should he be dead,
I'll for his soul have scores of masses said.
It is the least methinks that I can do."
While musing thus he chanced to look below;
And saw Sir Bruin on the other shore
Writhing and weltring in a pool of gore.
Reynard could scarce, so great was his surprise,
Believe the evidence of his own eyes.

"Bruin alive! and in this place!" quoth he,
"Why, Joiner, what a Booby you must be!
A Bear's hams make the most delicious food!
You could not surely know they were so good.
A dish, by which a Duke would set vast store,
To be so slighted by a stupid Boor!
My Friend has left though, I am glad to see,
A pledge for your kind hospitality."

Thus spake the Fox, as he beheld the Bear,
Lying all weary-worn and bleeding there.
Then he called out—"Why, Uncle, is that you?
What upon earth can you have here to do?
You've something at the Joiner's left, I fear,
Shall I run back and let him know you're here?
Prithee, is stolen Honey very sweet?
Or did you honestly pay for your treat?
How red your face is! you have ate too quick;
I trust you have not gorged till you are sick.
Really you should have been more moderate;
I could have got you lots at the same rate.
Nay, I declare—I trust there is no harm in't—
You seem t' have on some sort of Priestly garment;
With scarlet gloves, and collar too, and hat;

Rather a dangerous prank to play is that.
Yet, now I look more close, your ears are gone, sure ;
Have you of late submitted to the tonsure,
And did the stupid Barber cut them off ?”
Thus did the cruel-hearted Reynard scoff ;
While Bruin, all unable to reply,
Could only moan with grief and agony.
No longer could he these sharp jibes sustain,
So crept into the water back again :
He floated downward with the stream once more,
And again landed on the shelving shore.
There in a miserable state he lay,
And piteously unto himself did say ;
“ That Someone would but slay me here outright !
Ne’er shall I reach the Court in this sad plight ;
But on this spot in shame and grief shall die,
A mortal proof of Reynard’s treachery.
Oh ! I will have a dire revenge, I swear,
If it please Providence my life to spare.”

With firm resolve his pain to overcome,
At length he started on his journey home ;
And after four long toilsome days were past,
Crippled and maimed, he reached the Court at last.

When the King saw the Bear so sorely maimed,
“ Great Heaven ! Is this Sir Bruin ?” he exclaimed ;
“ My trusty Messenger in such a state !”

“ Ah, Sire !” said Bruin, “ and is this the fate
That should a King’s Ambassador befall ?
But spare my breath—the Fox has done it all.”

Then spake the King in wrath ; “ Now by the Mafs,
This outrage vile shall not unpunished pass.
What ! shall the noblest Baron of our court
Afford this Traitor means of savage sport ?
No ; by my sceptre and my crown I swear,

If crown or sceptre I am fit to bear,
Or of stern Justice longer wield the sword,
Right shall be done ! Pledged is my royal word."

Summoned in haste the Council promptly fate,
On this fresh outrage to deliberate.
Subject to the King's will, they all agree
That Reynard once again must summoned be ;
At Court he should appear ; and, if he might,
Answer th' impeachment and defend his right :
Tybalt, the Cat, should now the summons carry,
As he was well known to be wise and wary.

So counselled One and All : the King concurr'd ;
And thus to Tybalt spoke his Sov'reign Lord ;

" Now mark your mission and the sequence well ;
If a third summons Reynard should compel,
He and his whole Race, I have sworn an oath,
Shall feel the deadly power of my wrath.
So let him come in time, if he be wise ;
Nor this last warning recklessly despise."

Tybalt replied ; " My Liege, I fear that I
Shall scarcely prosper in this embassy ;
Not that indeed I ought to say, ' I fear ; '
To do Your will all danger would I dare :
I merely hint, that for this task, of All
I am least fit, being so very small.
If the stout, stalwart Bear was so abused,
What can poor I do ? Hold me, pray, excused."

" Nay," said the King, " Wisdom and Wit, 'tis
known,
Are not the attributes of Strength alone.
How often do we see a little Man
Succeed more neatly than a great one can.
Though not a Giant, you are learned and wise,
And Wisdom compensates for want of Size."

The Cat was flattered and he bowed his head ;
“ Your will be done, my Sov’reign Liege,” he said ;
“ If on my right I only see a sign,
A prosp’rous journey will, I know, be mine.”





CHAPTER THE THIRD.

The Second Summons.

NOT far did Tybalt on his journey get,
Before a Magpie on the wing he met:
“Hail, noble bird;” quoth he, “vouchsafe to ‘light,
As a propitious omen, on my right.”

The Magpie screeched; his onward way he cleft;
Then stooped his wing and perched on Tybalt’s left.

The Cat much serious ill from this forebode,
But on it put the best face that he could.
To Malepartus he proceeded straight,
And found Sir Reynard sitting at his gate.

“Good Even, gentle Cousin,” Tybalt said,
“May bounteous Heav’n show’r blessings on your head.
I bring sad news; the King has sent to say,
If you come not to Court without delay,
Not only your own life will forfeit be,
His wrath will fall on your whole Family.”

“Welcome, dear Nephew,” quoth the Fox; “not less
I wish you ev’ry kind of happiness.”



Though thus he spoke, it went against his will;
 For in his heart he wished him ev'ry ill;
 And thought 'twould be the very best of sport
 To send him also back disgraced to Court.

"Nephew," said he; for he still called him

Nephew;

"Step in and see what supper we can give you;
 You must be tired; and all physicians tell ye,
 You can't sleep soundly on an empty belly.
 I am your Host for once; you stay to-night;
 And we'll to Court start with to-morrow's light.
 For you of all my Kindred love I best,
 To you confide myself the readiest.

That brutal Bear was here the other day,
 Bouncing and fwaggering in such a way,
 That not for all the world contains would I
 Myself have trusted in his company.
 But having you my Comrade, travelling
 Will be a very different fort of thing.
 So you will share our potluck, then to bed,
 And off we start by sunrife: that's agreed."

"Nay," replied Tybalt, "why not go to-night?
 The roads are dry; the moon is shining bright."

May be, the omen on his mem'ry struck;
 May be, he had no fancy for potluck.

"I am not fond of trav'lling after nightfall;"
 Replies the Fox; "some People are so spiteful;
 Who, though by day they civilly would greet you,
 Would cut your throat, if they by night should meet you."

"Well but," says Tybalt, in a careless way,
 "What have you got for supper if I stay?"

Says Reynard, "Well, I candidly avow,
 Our larder is but poorly stocked just now;
 But we've some honey-comb, if you like that."

"Like such infernal rubbish!" quoth the Cat,
 And spat, and sware a loud and lusty oath,
 As he was wont to do when he was wroth;
 "If you indeed had got a Mouse or so,
 I should much relish them; but honey—pooh!"

"What!" answers Reynard, "are you fond of Mice?
 I think I can procure some in a trice,
 If you're in earnest; for the Priest, my Neighbor,
 Vows that to keep them down is quite a labor;
 In his tithe barn so num'rously they swarm;
 They do him, he declares, no end of harm."

Thoughtlessly said the Cat, "Do me the favor
 To take me where these Mice are; for in flavor

All other game they beat out of the field ;
Beside the sport which they in hunting yield."

" Well," says the Fox, " now that I know
your taste,
I'll promise you shall have a sumptuous feast.
We'll start at once and not a moment waste." }

Tybalt had faith and followed ; quickly they
Reached the Priest's tithe barn, built with walls of clay.
Only the day before, Reynard a hole
Had through it scratched, and a fat Pullet stole.
Martin, the Priest's young Son—or Nephew rather,
For he was ne'er allowed to call him *Father*,—
Had found the theft out, and, if possible,
Determined to find out the Thief as well ;
So, craftily, a running noose he tied,
And fixed it firmly by the hole inside ;
Thus hoped he to avenge the stolen Pullet,
Should the Thief chance return, upon his gullet.

Reynard, suspecting something of the sort,
Said, " Nephew dear, I wish you lots of sport ;
In at this opening you can safely glide ;
And while you're mousing, I'll keep watch outside.
You'll catch them by the dozen, now 'tis dark :
How merrily they chirrup ; only hark !
I shall be waiting here till you come back ;
So come as soon as you have had your whack.
To-night, whatever happens, we'll not part,
As we so early in the morning start."

Tybalt replies, as any prudent Beast would,
" I've no great faith, I own it, in the Priesthood :
Is't quite safe, think ye ?" Reynard answers, " Well ;
Perhaps not : 'tis impossible to tell ;
We'd best return at once, as you're so nervous ;
My Wife, I'll answer for it, will not starve us ;

She'll tofs us up for supper something nice,
If not quite so much to your taste as Mice."

Stung to the quick by Reynard's taunting tongue,
Into the op'ning Tybalt boldly sprung,
And plunged directly in the ready snare :
Such entertainment and such dainty fare
Did the sly Fox for all his Guests prepare. }

When the Cat felt the string about his neck,
He gave a sideward spring and got a check ;
This made him throw a wondrous somersault,
And, the noose tight'ning, he was fairly caught.
To Reynard then he loudly called for aid,
Who list'ning at the hole in mock'ry said ;

" Nephew, how are the Mice ? I hope they're fat ;
They are well fed enough, I'm sure of that :
If the Priest knew his vermin were your venison,
I'm sure he'd bring some mustard, with his benison ;
Or send his Son with it,—that best of Boys.
But Nephew, prithee, why make such a noise ?
Is it at Court the fashion so to sing
At meals ? It seems an inconvenient thing.
Oh ! but I wish the gentle Isgrim
Were in your place ; how I would badger him !
I stake my tail on't I would make him pay
For all the ill he's wrought me many a day."

Then off he starts t' indulge some other vice ;
No matter what ; he was not over nice :
There never lived a Soul, at any time,
More foully tainted with all kinds of crime ;
Murder and theft, adultery and perjury ;
'Twas past the skill of spiritual surgery :
He'd broke the Ten Commandments o'er and o'er,
And would as readily have broke a score.

He fancied now some fresh sport might be found

In a short visit to Dame Gieremund;
This he proposed with a two-fold intent;
To learn the grounds of Ifegrim's complaint;
And likewise to renew an ancient sin,
Which he especially delighted in.
If'grim, he knew, was absent at the Court;
And it was common subject of report,
The She-Wolf's passion for the shameless Fox
Had made her Husband's hatred orthodox.

When Reynard to the Wolf's retreat had come,
He found Dame Gieremund was not at home:
"God bless you, my Stepchildren dear:" quoth he;
And to the young ones nods good-humour'dly:
The object of his call he never mentions;
But hastes away after his own inventions.

Dame Gieremund returns at break of day;
"Has no one called here, while I've been away?"
Asks she; her Children answer, "Yes, Mamma;
We've had a visit from our Godpapa,
Reynard; he called us his Stepchildren though;
What did he mean by that?" "I'll let him know;"
Quoth she, and angrily she hurried off,
Determined to avenge this cutting scoff.
She knew where it was likely she should meet him;
And when she found him thus began to greet him:

"Wretch, Monster, Brute!" her rage was quite
bewild'ring;

"How dare you use such language to my Children?
You, of all Men, t' attack my character!
But you shall dearly pay for it, I swear."

With that she flew at him, and—oh disgrace!
She pulled him by the beard and scratched his face.
Then first he felt the power of her teeth,
As, grappled by the throat; he gasped for breath;

He 'scaped her clutches though, and fled amain;
She, after him; and mark, what happened then.

It chanced a ruined abbey stood in sight,
And thitherward in haste both bent their flight:
A fissure was there in the crumbling wall,
Narrow it was and low and all ways small;
Through this the subtle Fox contrived to pass,
Though hardly, thin and lanky as he was;
My Lady, who was anything but slim,
Rammed in her head and tried to follow him;
But fast she stuck—it seemed Fate helped the
Blackguard,—

And she could neither forward get nor backward.
Soon as the Fox saw how she was confin'd,
Quick he whipped round and fell on her behind;
And not without full many a bitter scoff,
For all she'd done he amply paid her off.
Wearied with vengeance, if not satiated,
The mischief-loving Rogue at length retreated.
And when Dame Gieremund at length got free,
No where in all the neighbourhood was he.
Homeward, with tott'ring steps, she then return'd;
While with revenge and shame her panting bosom
burn'd.

Return we now to Tybalt; when he found
How in that slipknot durance he was found,
That strength and struggling nothing might avail,
After the mode of Cats, he 'gan to wail.
This Martin heard, and swift sprang out of bed:
“The Lord be praised;” the spiteful Urchin said,
“The Thief is caught that stole our Hen away;
And, please the pigs, he shall the piper pay;
And that right dearly too, if but the noose hold:”
Then struck a light and woke up all the Household;



Shouting, "The Fox is caught!" Up rose they all,
And came down helter-skelter, great and small;
Women and Men, in shirts, and in chemises,
But ill protected 'gainst the cool night-breezes.
Roused from his sleep, e'en the good Father came;
But threw a mantle round his decent frame;
His Cook with lighted flambeau ran before;
The little Martin a stout cudgel bore;

With this, soon as the wretched Cat he spies out,
 He strikes a blow and knocks one of his eyes out.
 All fell upon him; with a threepronged fork,
 The Priest approached and deemed to end the work.
 Then Tybalt thought it was his hour to die;
 One plunge he made with desperate energy,
 Darting between the Rev'rend Pastor's thighs,
 He scratched and bit with wild demoniac cries,
 And fearfully avenged his injured eyes. }
 The Parson shrieked and fell into a swoon;
 The Cook beside him knelt in anguish down;
 Pitying the sufferings of the good old Priest,
 She said, "The Devil damn the vicious Beast!"
 And wildly did she prattle in her ravings;
 She would have lost far sooner all her savings,
 Than this mishap had chanced; she even swore,
 That if she had possessed of gold a store,
 In alms she would have freely giv'n it, rather
 Than such hurt had been done the worthy Father.
 Thus did she wail, and many tears she shed:
 At length they bore him bleeding to his bed.
 In grief some passed the night, and some in chat, }
 Trying to put together this and that;
 And quite forgetting all about the Cat.

But Tybalt, when he found himself alone,
 Maimed tho' he was, with half his senses gone,
 Felt the strong love of life tenacious yet,
 And from that stubborn noose resolved to get.
 He seized it in his teeth and gnawed amain,
 And with success, for the cord brake in twain;
 And he was loose. How happy then was he,
 If such a woful Wretch could happy be.
 Out at the hole he crept, where he sprang in,
 And fled the spot, where he'd so outraged been.

He hastened on his road, in shame and sorrow,
Towards the Court, and reached it on the morrow.
And bitterly did he himself upbraid:
“Me! to be so completely gulled!” he said;
“How shall I ever show my face for shame,
All batter’d as I am, half blind, and lame?
The very Sparrows in the hedge will cry out,
‘There you go, Master Tybalt, with your eye out!’”

Who shall describe the wrath King Noble felt,
When at his feet the injured Tybalt knelt?
He swore the Traitor vile should die the death:
His Council in all haste he summoned:
The Lords Spiritual and Temporal
Assembled in obedience to his call:
And the King said—He wished it to be known
He would maintain the honor of His Crown;
That is, so it were done consistently
With the true principles of liberty:
But something must at once be done to stem
Rebellion; and He left it all to them.—
Judgment, ’twas moved, against the Fox should pass, he
Being doomed at once to death for contumacy.

The Badger, seeing what a storm was brewing,
How all conspired to work his Kinsman’s ruin,
Thus spake; “My Liege, it boots not to deny
These charges press on Reynard grievously;
But Justice follows one eternal plan:
Remember, Sire, the Fox is a Free Man;
The Law in such a case is most precise
Requiring that he should be summoned thrice:
If then he fail, there is nought more to say;
But Law and Justice both must have their way.”

“Ha!” said the Monarch sternly, “say you so?
Where shall be found the Messenger to go?”

Who hath an eye too many? who will stake
His life and limbs for this bad Traitor's fake?
'Gainst Reynard's cunning who will wage his wit?
I doubt if any one will venture it."

The Badger answered, "I will venture, Sire;
And undertake the task, if You desire;
Happen what may. Whether 'tis better, I
A summons bear straight from Your Majesty;
Or of my own accord appear to go:
Whichever You think best, that will I do."

"Go then! so let it be;" the Monarch said;
"You know what crimes to Reynard's charge are laid;
You know too all his malice; so beware,
Your Predecessors' fate left you may share."

Greybeard replied, "I trust I may prevail;
But shall have done my duty, if I fail."

Away to Malepartus doth he hie;
Finds Reynard with his Wife and Family;
And greets him; "Save you, Uncle: I can't tell
How charmed I am to see you look so well.
E'en let your Enemies say what they can,
You're a most extraordinary Man:
Prudent and wise and wary as you are,
Yet the King's wrath so scornfully to dare.
You'd best be warned in time: on every side
Are ill reports against you multiplied.
Take my advice; with me to Court away,
'Twill help you nothing longer to delay.
You're charged with almost every sort of crime;
You're summoned now to-day for the third time,
And surely sentenced if you fail to appear:
The King will straightway lead his Barons here;
And what can you expect will then befall?
You will be taken and hanged: nor is that all:

Your fortrefs razed, your Children and your Wife
Cruelly butchered, or enslaved for life.
From the King's wrath you cannot hope to flee ;
Better then, surely, to return with me.
You need not dread to stand before your Judges ;
You're never at a loss for cunning dodges :
With your consummate skill and artifice,
You've got thro' many a scrape, and will thro' this."

Thus Greybeard spake, and Reynard thus replied ;
" Your counsel, Nephew, shall my conduct guide :
I were to blame, should I your warning slight ;
I will to Court ; and Heav'n defend the right ;
The King besides, I trust, some grace may show ;
The use I've been to him he well doth know ;
That for no other cause than this I'm hated,
And, save your presence, like a Badger baited.
The Court would go to pieces but for me ;
I don't pretend that from all blame I'm free ;
But were I ten times deeper in disgrace,
Could I but see my Sov'reign face to face,
And come to speech with him, I would engage
To soothe the transports of his Royal rage.
Many 'tis true may at his council sit ;
But many heads have oft but scanty wit :
When they get fixed in one of their dead locks,
To whom send they for aid, but to the Fox ?
No matter how involved the case may be,
They find it smooth and easy, thanks to me.
For this I meet with envy ; even those
I most befriend turn out my bitt'rest foes ;
But moralists agree 'tis not more hateful,
Than it is natural, to be ungrateful.
'Tis this I have to fear ; for well I know
My death they have intended long ago.

Ten of the mightiest Barons in the land
 My utter downfal seek—a pow’rful band:
 Can I alone such odds as these withstand?
 ’Twas only this kept me from Court, I vow;
 But I agree ’twere best to go there now.
 By far more honorable that will be,
 Than bring my dearest Wife and Family,
 By tarrying here, into disgrace and trouble;
 For that would only make the mischief double.
 And of the King I stand in wholesome awe,
 His arm is mighty and his will is law.
 Mine Enemies perchance by courtesy
 I may subdue; at least I can but try.”

Then to his Wife, who stood with weeping eyne,
 He turned and said—“My gentle Ermelyne,
 Be mindful of our Children; yet I know
 You need no hint from me to make you so.
 Our youngest, Greykin, will most care require;
 He’ll be the living image of his Sire,
 If these convulsions do not stop his breathing,
 And by Heaven’s blessing he survive his teething.
 And here’s this cunning little rascal, Ruffel,
 He thro’ the world will manage well to bustle;
 His pluck may get him into many a scrape,
 His craft will ever teach him how to ’scape;
 I love him well, and have no fear for him;
 He’ll be a match, I ween, for Ifegrim
 And all his Brood. And now, farewell, dear Chuck;
 When I return, as, have I any luck,
 I soon shall do, I’ll prove me sensible
 Of all your kindness: so once more, farewell.”

Then from his home with Greybeard he departed;
 And sad he felt in spirit and down-hearted;
 And sad too, grieving for her mate and sick son,

Was the leal foul of Ermelyne, the Vixen.

Reynard nor Greybeard neither silence brake
For near an hour ; then thus the former spake ;

“ Ah, Nephew, heavy is my soul to-night ;
For truth to speak, I’m in a mortal fright ;
My frame with strange forebodings shuddereth ;
I feel assured I go to certain death ;
My conscience sinks ’neath mine enormities ;
You little think how ill I am at ease.
Will you, dear Nephew, my confession hear ?
There is, alas ! no reverend Pastor near :
Could I but of this load my bosom free,
I then should face the King more cheerfully.”

“ Confession certes benefits the soul,”

Quoth Greybeard, “ but you must confess the whole ;
All treasons, felonies and misdemeanors,
However great—and great, no doubt, have been yours.”

“ Yea,” answered Reynard, “ I will nought conceal ;
Lift then, oh, lift, while I my crimes reveal.
Confiteor tibi, Pater—” “ Nay, no Latin !”

Quoth Greybeard : “ ’tis a tongue I’m nowise pat in.
It would not much avail you to be shriven,
If I knew not the sins I had forgiven.”

“ So be it then ;” the Fox rejoined ; “ I ween
A very wicked sinner I have been ;
And I must do what penance you enjoin
To save this miserable soul of mine.
The Otter, and the Dog, and many more,
With many a trick have I tormented fore :
Indeed of living beasts there scarce is one
To whom I’ve not some turn of mischief done.
Mine Uncle Bruin I beguiled of late ;
With honey he prepared his maw to fate ;
I sent him back with bloody paws and pate :

And Cousin Tibby, he came here to mouse; }
 I cozen'd him into a running noose, }
 And there, I'm told, an eye he chanced to lose.
 But I must say the fault was somewhat theirs;
 They should have minded more the King's affairs,
 With justice too complains Sir Chanticleer;
 I ate his chicks—and very good they were.
 Nay, with unfeigned repentance I must own
 I have not spared the King upon the throne;
 And, Heaven forgive me for it! even the Queen
 Has not been safe from my malicious spleen.
 But most I've outraged Isengrim, the Wolf;
 'Twixt him and me yawns an abyssmal gulf.
 Him I've disgraced in every way I could;
 And if I might have done so more, I would.
 I've even called him Uncle, as a jibe;
 For I'm no kin to any of his tribe.

"He came to me about six years ago;
 I lived then in the cloister, down below;
 He sought my help a Monk to get him made;
 His fancy was to toll the bells, he said;
 He loved the sound so much: so with a loop,
 I fastened his fore-feet into the rope:
 He was delighted, and began to toll—
 'Twas the great bell—with all his heart and soul;
 But not much credit did his efforts win;
 For he kicked up such an infernal din,
 Out rushed the People when the noise they heard,
 Thinking some dread mishap must have occur'd.
 They came and found my friend the Wolf; and ere
 His purpose to turn Monk he could declare,
 They fell to work, and so belabored him,
 'Twas all but up with Master Isengrim.

"The Fool was still unsatisfied; still craved

To be a Monk and have his noddle shaved ;
With a hot iron then I singed his poll,
Till the swart skin all shrivelled on his skull.
Ah ! many are the blows and thumps and kicks
That he has been regaled with through my tricks.
I taught him the best manner to catch Fish ;
And he caught just as many as I'd wish.

“Once, when in partnership we chanced t' engage,
We groped our way into a parsonage ;
Well stored the larder was of the good Priest,
For he was rich and amply benefic'd.
Bacon there was and hams more than enough,
And lots of pork lay salting in a trough.
If grim contrived to scratch the stone wall through,
And crept in at the hole with much ado,
Urged on by me and his own appetite ;
For with long fasting he was rav'nous quite.
I did not follow, as I had some doubt
How, if I once got in, I might get out.
If grim gorged till chuck-full to the eyes,
And swell'd to nearly twice his former size ;
So that, although he strove with might and main,
He could not for his life get out again.
'Thou lett'st me in,' he cried, 'oh, faithless hole !
Empty, and will not let me out when full.'
Away I hastened ; raised a loud alarm,
On the Wolf's track in hopes the Boors might swarm.
Into the Parson's dwelling then I run ;
And find him to his dinner sitting down,—
A fine fat capon just brought on the tray,—
This I snapped up, and with it stole away.
Up rose the Priest in haste and overthrew
The table with the food and liquors too ;
On every side the glass and crockery flew.



'Kill him!' call'd out th' enraged Ecclesiastic;
 'Oh! that the bones in his damn'd gullet may stick!'

Then, his feet catching in the cloth, he stumbled,
 And all among the messes and fragments tumbled.
 But loudly he continued still to bawl:
 The hubbub brought the Household, one and all.

Away I sped, as fast as I could go ;
They after me, with whoop and tally-ho :
The Parson shouting loud as he was able,
'The Thief! he's stole my dinner from my table!'
I ne'er, until I reached the pantry, stopped ;
But there, ah, well-a-day! the fowl I dropped ;
I could no longer toil beneath its weight,
But lightened of my load escaped by flight.
The Parson, stooping to pick up the fowl,
Spied Master If'grim stuck fast in the hole :
'Halloo!' he cried, 'halloo! come here, my friends!
'See what a scapegoat righteous Heaven sends!
'Here's a Wolf caught; if he should get away
'We were disgraced for ever and a day.'
The Wolf no doubt wished he'd ne'er seen the larder ;
Meanwhile their blows rained on him, harder and harder;
And many a grievous thump and kick and thwack
He got upon his shoulders, sides and back ;
And all the while, as if the Devil stirr'd them,
They yelled and screamed and swore—I stood and
 heard them.
At length it seemed all up with Ifegrim ;
He swooned ; and then they left off beating him.
I'd lay a bet he never had before
His hide so curried, and will never more.
'Twould make an altar-piece, to paint the way
They made him for the Parson's victuals pay.
At length out in the street for dead they threw him ;
And over shards and pebbles rough they drew him :
Then flung him, as no signs of life he show'd, }
Into a stagnant ditch beside the road, }
And left him buried there in slime and mud.
How he recovered's more than I can tell ;
It almost seems a sort of miracle.

“Yet after this, about a year, he swore
To be my Friend and firm Ally once more :
I cannot say his word I quite believed ;
I felt that one of us would be deceived.



I soon found out his object was to get
A meal of Fowls on which his heart was set.
I told him of a rafter, where there us'd
A Cock with seven fine fat Hens to roost.

It was past twelve o'clock one cloudy night,
When moon and stars gave not one ray of light,
I took him to a house I'd known before,
Where was a window on the second floor;
The lattice shutter by good luck stood ope;
To this along the wall we ffly crope;
And, being never barren in expedients,
I prayed mine Uncle he would take precedence:
'Go boldly in,' I whispered; 'do not fear;
'You never saw such Fowls, as you'll find here;
'I'll warrant, you ne'er finer met or plumper;
'I'd lay my life you'll carry off a thumper.'
Cautiously in he stole, while I stayed out;
And here and there he 'gan to grope about:
But before long in tones subdued he said,
'Reynard, by all that's Holy, I'm betrayed;
'You've led me, I suspect, a wildgoose chase;
'Of Fowls I find not the remotest trace.'
'The foremost I've long had,' said I; 'you'll find
'The others just a little way behind:
'You'd better make your way across the rafter;
'Don't be afraid; I'll follow closely after.'
This rafter now was anything but broad,
And no ways suited to sustain a load;
And Ifegrim was fain to use his talons
In order any how to keep his balance.
Out at the window I contrived to back,
And then flammed to the shutter in a crack;
It jarred the rafter, and the Wolf fell plump, ere
He could restore himself, a monstrous thumper.
Thus was again my prophecy fulfill'd;
In such prophetic warnings am I skill'd.
The Housecarles, who around the chimney dozed,
Were, by his heavy fall, from slumber roused;

‘What’s that fall’n from the window?’ cried they all,
And lit the lamp and searched about the hall;
And in a corner found they Ifegrim;
Good Saints in Heav’n! how they did punish him!
Yet somehow he contrived to get away
With a whole skin, but how I cannot say.



“I must confess too, even though it wound
A lady’s honor, with Dame Gieremund
I’ve oftentimes committed mortal sin:—
It is so hard to stop when you begin.
This fault with deep contrition I deplore,
And trust I never may be tempted more.

"Such are my sins, O Father! if not all,
At least I have confessed the principal.
I pray for absolution, and submit
To whatsoever penance you think fit."

Then Greybeard shook his head, looked wife
and big;

And from a neighb'ring bush plucked off a twig.
"My Son," quoth he, "this rod receive; with it
Three times your back in penance must you smite;
Next, having laid it gently on the ground,
Three times across it must you gravely bound;
Lastly, in humble and obedient mood,
Three times with reverence must you kiss the rod.
This done, I pardon and absolve you quite,
And every other punishment remit."

This penance cheerfully by Reynard done,
Greybeard resumed; "Let your good works, my Son,
Prove the sincerity of your repentance.
Read psalms, and learn by heart each pious sentence;
Go oft to Church; mind what the Pastor says;
And duly fast on the appointed days;
Show those, who seek, the right path; from your store
Give willingly and largely to the poor;
And from your heart and soul renounce the Devil
And all his works, and ev'ry thought of evil.
So shall you come to Grace at last." "To do
All this," said Reynard, "solemnly I vow."

The shrift now ended, tow'ards the Court they bent
Their steps,—the Confessor and Penitent—
In seeming meditation wrapt: their way
Through pleasant woods and fertile pastures lay.
On their right hand an ancient cloister stood,
Where holy women of religious mood,
Passed a pure life in social solitude.

Stored was their yard with Cocks and Hens and
Chickens,
Who often roamed abroad in search of pickings.



Reynard, when not with weightier matters buſied,
Would pay them frequently a friendly viſit.
And now to Greybeard did he turn and ſay,
“ By yonder wall you’ll find our ſhorteſt way.”

He did not mean exactly what he said; }
His Confessor towards the wall he led; }
While greedily his eyes rolled in his roguish head. }
One Cock'rell notes he in particular,
Who plump and proud was strutting in the rear :
On him pounced Reynard sudden from behind,
And made his feathers scatter in the wind.

While the Fox licked his disappointed chaps,
Greybeard, incensed at such a sad relapse,
Exclaimed, "Alas! alas! what have you done?
Is this your penitence, unworthy Son?
Fresh from confession, for a paltry Fowl
Will you so peril your unhappy soul?"

Said Reynard, "You rebuke me as you ought;
For I have sinned in truth, tho' but in thought.
Pray for me, dearest Nephew, pray to Heaven,
With other sins that this may be forgiven.
Never, oh! never more will I offend."

The cloister passed, the highway they regain'd :
Their pathway lay across a narrow nook :
The Fox behind cast many a longing look
Towards those tempting Fowls; it was in vain
He strove his carnal yearnings to restrain.
If any one had then struck off his head,
Back to the Fowls it must perforce have fled.

Greybeard said sternly, "Whither doth your eye
Still wander? This is hateful gluttony."

Quoth Reynard, "You quite misconceive th'
affair;

You should not interrupt me when in pray'r.
Let me conclude my orisons for those
Whose souls I've sent to premature repose;
Their bodies to my maw a prey were given :
For thus accomplished was the will of Heaven."

Greybeard was filent; Reynard did not turn
His head, while yet the Fowls he could discern.

They've left the cloister now behind them quite;
They near the Court; the Palace is in sight:
Reynard's bold heart beats faintly in his breast;
So grave the charges that against him preft.





CHAPTER THE FOURTH.

The Trial.

SOON as 't was known by general report

Reynard was really coming to the Court,
Out they all rushed in haste, both Great and Small,
Eager to see the famous Criminal:
In flocks and herds and droves they thronged to
meet him,

But scarce did one with word of welcome greet him.

Reynard cared little though for this: he thought—
Or seem'd at least to think—it mattered nought.
With Greybeard on indiff'rent things he talked
As, bold as brags, along the street he walked;
He could not, had he been the King's own Son,
Free from all crime, with prouder step have gone:
And so before the King and all his Peers
He stood, as though he felt nor doubts nor fears.

“Dread Lord and gracious Sov’reign!” thus said he,
“For ever gracious have You proved to me;—
Therefore I stand before You, void of fear,
Sure that my tale with patience you will hear;—
A more devoted Servant to the Crown,
Than I have been, my Liege hath never known;
’Tis this brings me such hosts of Enemies,
Who strive to work me mischief in Your eyes;
And bitter reason should I have to grieve,
Could You one half their calumnies believe.
But high and just and righteous all Your views are;
You hear th’ Accused, as well as the Accuser:
Howe’er behind my back they slander me,
You know how great is my integrity.”

“Silence that lying tongue!” the Monarch cries,
“Nor think to veil your crimes with sophistries.
In one career of vice your life is spent;
It calls aloud to Heav’n for punishment.
How have you kept the peace that I ordained
Throughout My kingdom’s breadth should be maintained?”

You mourns the Cock, disconsolate with grief;
His Children slain by you, false-hearted Thief!
You boast of your devotion to the Crown,
Is’t by your treatment of My Servants shown?
Bruin, by your devices, hath been lamed;
My faithful Tybalt so severely maimed,
The Leech doubts if he may his health restore—
But I will waste My words on you no more;
Lo! your Accusers press on every side;
All further subterfuge seems now denied.”

“Ah! Sire,” rejoined the Fox, “am I to blame
My Uncle Bruin has returned so lame?
Or is it my fault he has tastes so funny,

He muſt needs pilfer honeſt People's honey ?
What if the Peaſants caught him in the fact,
And, 'ſpite his ſize and ſtrength, he got well whack'd ?
I could not help it, nor could ſuccour him ;—
In ſooth 't was lucky he knew how to ſwim.
Then as for Tybalt, when he came to me,
I ſhewed him ev'ry hoſpitality.
Gave him the beſt I had ; but not content,
His mind was wholly upon thieving bent :
He ſcorned my larder, and would poke his noſe in
The Parſon's granary to go a mouſing,
In ſpite of all my caution and advice—
It ſeems he has a ſtrange penchant for Mice.
Shall I be puniſhed becauſe they were Fools ?
Does that comport with Juſtice' ſacred rules ?
But You will do Your royal will I know ;
And I muſt e'en ſubmit for weal or woe :
Whether I am imprifoned, tortured, martyred,
Burnt or beheaded, or hung, drawn and quartered ;
So it muſt be, if ſo it be You liſt ;
Your pow'r is great, how can the Weak reſiſt ?
Tho' to the State ſmall good my death will bring ;
I ſhall at leaſt die loyal to my King."

Up ſpake the Ram then, " Friends, the time is
come ;

Urge now your complaints, or evermore be dumb !"

Then, all confederate for Reynard's ruin,

Stept Tybalt forth, and Iſegrim, and Bruin ;

And other beaſts came ſwarming by the ſcore,

The thin-ſkinn'd Roebuck and the thick-ſkinn'd

Boar,

Neddy the Donkey too, and many more.

Frizzy the Poodle alſo, and the Goat,

The Squirrel, and the Weazel, and the Stoat ;

Nor did the Ox or Horſe fail to appear ;
 And Beaſts of ſavage nature too were there ;
 The flitting Rabbit, and the nimble Hare. }
 The Swan, the Stork, the Heron and the Crane ;
 All thither flew, all eager to complain.
 Sibby the Goofe, with anger hiſſing, came,
 And the Duck Quackley, who was ſadly lame ;
 And Chanticleer, that moſt unhappy Cock,
 Whoſe ſorrows might have touched a heart of rock,
 With the few Children that to him were left,
 Accuſed the Fox of murder and of theft.
 In countleſs flocks came ſwarming in the Birds,
 The Beaſts in vaſt innumerable herds ;
 All vehement alike on vengeance bent,
 All clam'rous preſs'd for Reynard's puniſhment.
 Charge upon charge there followed, thick and faſt,
 And each freſh plaint more weighty than the laſt.
 Since Noble ſat upon his Father's throne,
 Was never yet ſuch a Grand Oyer known ;
 Indeed ſo num'rous the complainants were,
 It ſeemed an Oyer with no Terminer.

Meanwhile the Fox conducted his defence
 With moſt conſummate ſkill and impudence ;
 One time a Witneſs he would browbeat ſo,
 That what he ſaid the poor man ſcarce ſhould know ;
 Or elſe repeat his answers in a tone,
 Which gave a ſenſe quite diff'rent from his own ;
 Or interrupt with ſome facetious jeſt,
 Or tell a ſtory with ſuch hum'rous zeſt,
 That, ſerious things forgotten in the ſport,
 They laugh'd the Proſecutor out of Court.
 And when he ſpoke, Truth ſeemed to tip his tongue,
 Indignant as each charge aſide he flung ;
 They heard with wonder and diverſion blent,

Almost disposed to think him innocent ;
Nay, some there were who more than half believed
He was himself the Party most aggrieved.

At length came Witnesses who stood so high
For unimpeachable veracity,
That all his crimes and outrages, as clear
As is the sun at noon, were made appear.
The Council all agreeing, with one breath,
Pronounced him guilty and condemned to death ;
Bound, to the gallows he should thence be led,
And hanged there by the neck till he was dead.

And Reynard now gave up the game for lost ;
His skill had served him for display at most ;
And as the King himself his doom pronounced,
All hope of mercy he as vain renounced ;
For seized and pinioned, hopeless was his case,
With ignominious death before his face.

As there he stood, disgraced, disconsolate,
His Foes bestirred themselves to speed his fate.
His Friends the while in silent awe stood round ;
Great was their trouble, and their pain profound ;
Martin the Ape, Greybeard, and many more,
Who to the hapless Culprit kindred bore :
The King's will they respected as they ought ;
But sorrow'd all—more than one might have thought :
For Reynard was a Peer of high degree,
And now stood stripped of every dignity ;
Adjudged to die a death of infamy. }

A sight indeed to make his Kinsmen grieve !
Then of the King they one and all took leave,
And left the Court, as many as were there ;
Reynard's disgrace they had no mind to share.

The King was sore chagrined though in his heart,
To see so many Peers and Knights depart :

It proved the Fox had some Adherents still
 Too much disposed to take his sentence ill.
 Then turning to his Chancellor, he said,
 "Though Reynard's crimes his doom have merited,
 'Tis cause for anxious thought and deepest care,
 How we his num'rous friends from Court may spare."

But Bruin, Isegrim and Tybalt, all
 Were busied round the luckless Criminal.
 Anxious to execute the King's decree,
 They hurried forth their hated Enemy,
 And onward hastened to the fatal tree.

Thus to the Wolf then spake the spiteful Cat :
 "Sir Isegrim, you've now got tit-for-tat ;
 You need not be reminded, I'll be sworn,
 Of all the wrongs from Reynard you have borne.
 You'll not forget, unless your heart's grown callous,
 He had your Brother hanged on that same gallows,
 And taunted him with many a biting scoff ;
 In his own coin you now can pay him off.
 Remember too the foul trick you were played,
 Sir Bruin, when by Reynard's craft betrayed
 To that base Joiner and his rabble Crew ;
 The insults you received, the beating too ;
 Besides the deep and scandalous disgrace
 To be the talking-stock of every place.
 Keep close together then and have a care ;
 Lest he slip off before one is aware :
 For if, by any artifice or chance,
 He now contrive to 'scape our vigilance,
 We shall remain eternally disgrac'd,
 Nor ever shall the sweets of vengeance taste."

Quoth Isegrim, "What boots it chattering so ?
 Fetch me a halter without more ado.
 A halter, ho ! and see that it be strong :

We would not have his suff'ring last too long."
Thus against Reynard did they vent their wrath,
As tow'rds the gibbet they held on their path.
He'd heard all they had said, and not yet spoke;
But now, with sidelong leer, he silence broke;

 "If you a halter want, Tybalt's the man
To fit you one upon the newest plan;
He knows how best to make a running noose,
From which one cannot possibly get loose;
He learnt it at the Parson's granary,
Where to catch Mice he went, and lost an eye.
But, Ifegrim! and Bruin! why pretend
Such zeal to hasten your poor Uncle's end?
In sooth it does not to your credit tend."

Now rose the King, with all his Lords, to see
Justice was done with due solemnity;
And, by her courtly Dames accompanied,
The Queen herself walked by the Monarch's side:
And never was there seen a Crowd so great
As followed them to witness Reynard's fate.

Meanwhile Sir Ifegrim his Friends besought
To march close packed, and keep a sharp look out;
For much he feared, lest by some shifty wile
The Fox might yet their watchfulness beguile:
And specially did he conjure his Wife;
"See that the Wretch escape not, on thy life;
If he should this time slip from out our pow'r,
We ne'er should know another peaceful hour.
Think of your wrongs;" thus Bruin he address'd;
"And see you pay them with full interest.
Tybalt can clamber; he the rope shall fix;
You hold Sir Reynard tight, and mind his tricks:
I'll raise the ladder, and you may depend on't
In a few minutes we shall make an end on't."

Quoth Bruin, "Quick! and get the ladder plac'd:
I'll warrant me I'll hold the Ruffian fast."

"Why should you take," again thus Reynard saith,
"Such pains to expedite your Uncle's death?
You know, the more the haste, the worse the speed.
Ah! sad and cruel is my lot indeed,
To meet with hate from such old Friends as you!
I know 'twere vain, or I for grace would sue.
Stern Ifegrim hath e'en compelled his Wife
Join this unkindly plot against my life:
Her memories of the past might surely wake
Some feelings of compassion for my sake:
But when you can foretell to-morrow's wind,
Then trust the constancy of Womankind.
But if so be it must; so let it be.
The sooner done, the sooner I am free.
My fate will but with my poor Father's match;
Albeit, good Soul, he died with more despatch.
Neither did such a goodly Company
Attend his death, as now has honor'd me.
You seem to fancy, if you spared me now
You'd all be shamed; and haply, 'twould be so."

"Hear him!" cried Bruin; "hear the Ruffian boast;
Quick! prithee, quick! let no more time be lost."

Then Reynard seriously to think began—
'Could I but now devise some cunning plan;
That, in this hour of my extremest need,
I might be pardoned and from bondage freed;
Escape with credit from death's bitter throes,
And heap disgrace on these detested Foes.
What can be done? 'tis worth some pains to take,
Since nothing less than life is here at stake.
Slight seem the chances for me; strong, against;
The King, no doubt, is bitterly incens'd;

My Enemies all here ; my Friends away ;
All my misdeeds brought to the light of day :—
And, truth to speak, but little good I've done ;
Yet ever hoped this evil hour to shun.



If they'd but grant me liberty of speech,
Some of their cruel hearts I yet might reach ;
And so get free of this accursed rope ;
At least I'll try it :—while there's life there's hope.'

Then turning on the ladder where he stood,
He thus addressed th' assembled Multitude :
" My doom is fixed ; chance of escape is none ;
Grant then a dying man one trifling boon :
Before you all, as many as are here,
Ere yet I close my criminal career,
Fain would I freely all my sins confess,
Lamenting that their number is not less ;
Else for some crime in secret done by me,
The Innocent perchance might punished be :
And thus my sinful soul some hope may have
Of mercy on the other side the grave."

Many were moved at this and 'gan to say ;
" Small is the favor, brief is the delay."
And as it seemed a reasonable thing,
They begged it and obtained it of the King.
A load was now removed from Reynard's heart,
And he at once prepared to play his part :
While through the Crowd expectant murmurs ran,
With well-feigned penitence he thus began :

" Oh, aid me now, *Spiritus Domini* !
For I am sentenced and must shortly die.
Vast as this meeting, scarce can I see one,
To whom I've not some grievous inj'ry done.
Whilst I was still a tiny little Brat,
Scarce weaned, and not much higher than my hat,
I loved to watch the Lambs and Kids at play
When from their watchful Herds they chanced to stray :
It made my bosom throb to hear them bleat,
My bowels yearn too for substantial meat.
Ere long, in jest, I bit to death a Lamb,
Who'd stroll'd away some distance from its Dam ;
While yet 'twas warm and fresh, I licked the blood,
And found that it was exquisitely good.

Four of the youngest Kids I next did slaughter :
The thought—Heav'n help me!—makes my mouth
yet water.

Grown bolder, I indulged each wild caprice ;
My tooth spared neither Fowls nor Ducks nor Geese ;
I caught and ate them wheresoever found,
And some, half-eaten, buried in the ground.

“ One winter, on the Rhine, it chanced I met
If 'grim,—a meeting I may well regret.
He claimed direct relationship with me,
Showed we were Cousins, and in what degree.
Guileless myself, I readily believed ;
Perhaps too ready to be so deceived.
Ourselves we bound then in a solemn league ;
Force should be used by him ; by me, intrigue ;
Eternal friendship each to each we swore,
Ah ! little did I ween what fruit his friendship bore.

“ The provinces we traversed, one and all ;
He the large booty stealing ; I, the small.
Our bargain was, we should divide all fair ;
But what he chose to leave was all my share ;
Nor was this all th' injustice I must bear. }
If e'er he chanced a Goat or Sheep to steal,
And I came up, and found him at his meal ;
Or caught him gorging a fresh-slaughtered Calf,
Of which he'd not devoured more than half ;
He'd grin his teeth at me, and swear and curse ;
I was e'en glad that matters were no worse.
And thus it was he always treated me,
However large the booty chanced to be.
In hunting, if we ever caught, by luck,
Some head of noble game, as Hind, or Buck,
Or Ox, or Cow, whose carcase vast was more
Than e'en his gluttony could all devour ;

His Wife and Children straight made their appearance,
 And in a trice there was a total clearance;
 Not e'en a spare rib fell unto my share,
 But what was gnawed and polished, clean and bare :
 And thus was I for ever forced to fare. }
 But Heav'n be thanked I never suffered hunger;
 I'd means to live on, twenty years or longer;
 A treasure vast of silver and of gold,
 Securely hidden in a secret hold.
 More than a single waggon, I might say
 Even at seven loadings, could convey."

Noble, the King, heard all that Reynard said,
 And bending forward now his Royal head;
 "Say then, where did you get it from?" he cried,
 "I mean the treasure." And the Fox replied,
 "It boots me nought to keep my secret now;
 I cannot take my wealth to where I go.
 All, as Your Grace commands me, will I tell;
 From fear or favor nought will I conceal.
 Stol'n was the treasure; I'll not tell a lie:
 Th' occasion though the theft shall justify.

"There was a plot, a most atrocious thing!
 Even to murder You, my Lord and King;
 And then to seize upon the vacant Throne:
 Beyond all doubt the deed would have been done,
 If but secure that treasure had been left;
 Your life, my Liege, depended on that theft,
 It helped indeed to lay my Father low,
 Perchance involved his soul in endless woe:
 But private interests, however dear,
 With public duties must not interfere."

The Queen had heard this lengthy rigmarole
 With most extreme bewilderment of soul,
 Alternating between alarm and pleasure;

Her Husband's murder, heaps of glitt'ring treasure,
And widow's weeds, and bridal garments white,
In wild confusion danced before her sight.

"Reynard," she cried, "your hour is almost come ;
Before you lies the road to your long home ;
Nought but true penitence can save your soul ;
Tell nothing but the truth, and tell the whole."

Then spake the King, "Be silent, ev'ry one !
Let Reynard from the gallows-tree come down ;
And let him,—but still bound,—approach mine ear,
'Tis fit that this strange hift'ry I should hear."

With cheerful hopes buoyed up the Fox descends,
While grieved his Foes were, and rejoiced his Friends ;
Approached, as he was bid, the King and Queen ;
Who longed to know what might this myst'ry mean.
His web of lies he straight prepared to spin ;
'If the King's grace,' he thought, 'I could but win,
And, by some cunning trick of policy,
Could ruin those who seek to ruin me,
From peril then should I be wholly freed.
Ah ! that would be a master stroke indeed
'Tis a bold cast : if I would prosper in't,
'Twill need the use of falsehood without stint.'

The Queen impatient questioned him again :
"The whole proceeding, Reynard, now explain ;
Speak truth, and ease your conscience and your soul."
"Truly," said Reynard, "will I tell the whole.
Am I not doomed, too justly doomed, to die ?
No chance there is to 'scape my destiny.
My soul to burden more at such a time
Were but to add a folly to my crime.
Better to speak the truth at any rate,
Though Friends and Kinsmen I may implicate.
There is no help for it, I know right well ;

Before mine eyes I have the pains of Hell."

And the King's heart with gloom was overspread ;
" And speak'st thou nought but sober truth ? " he said.

Reynard replied with sanctimonious mien,

" A miserable Sinner have I been ;

And oft have lied to serve mine interest ;

But surely now the truth shall aid me best :

Falsely to make a dying declaration

Would be to court eternal condemnation.

Yourself, my Liege, have doomed that I must die ;

With my last words I dare not breathe a lie."

While thus did Reynard, vile Diffempler, speak,
Remorse and terror seemed to blanch his cheek.

And the Queen said, " His anguish moves my ruth :

Encourage him, dear Lord, to speak the truth ;

And hear his story calmly to the end :

Our safety may upon his tale depend.

Give your commands that no one silence break,

And let him publicly his statement make."

At the King's bidding not a sound was heard ;

And Reynard spake, " Please you, my gracious Lord,

Receive with favor what I have to say ;

Though note nor minute have I here to-day,

The whole conspiracy will I lay bare,

And no one, be he Friend or Foe, will spare."





CHAPTER THE FIFTH.

The Pardon.

NOW hear what lying tales the Fox dared state,
To screen himself, and others inculpate ;
To what base falsehoods utterance he gave,
Slandered his very Father in the grave,
Traduced the Badger too, his staunchest Friend ;
He thought all means were sanctioned by the end ;
So he could but get credit for his lies,
And have revenge upon his Enemies.

Thus he began : " It chanced that once my Sire,
Whose wit and wisdom still the World admire,
Discovered, hid in an obscure retreat,
The treasures of King Emmerick the Great ;
It seemed a Godsend, but it brought such evil,
'Twas much more likely sent him from the Devil.
With his new fortune he waxed haught and proud ;
For his old Comrades deemed himself too good ;

Fancied that by assistance of his pelf
To higher circles he might raise himself;
Conceived ideas the most absurd and vain,
And hatched the strangest maggots in his brain.
He sent off Tybalt to Ardennes' wild regions
For Bruin, tend'ring him his sworn allegiance;
Inviting him to Flanders to repair,
And promising to make him King when there.
Bruin with vast delight his letter read,
Without delay to Flanders off he sped;
Him did my Sire exultingly receive;
And planned how their designs they might achieve.
They got to join them in the enterprise,
If'grim the savage, and Greybeard the wife.
These four in the conspiracy combin'd;
Four persons truly, though but one in mind;
While Tybalt joined their counsels for a fifth:
They journeyed onwards till they came to Ifth;
A little village is there of that name,
Obscure it is and all unknown to Fame;
'Twixt this and Ghent, in a sequestered spot,
They met together to arrange their plot.
Over the meeting, which murk night did hide,
The Devil and my Father did preside;
One o'er their minds with false hopes kept his hold,
One, with the influence of his dirty gold.
Regardless of all loyalty and faith,
They compassed and imagined the King's death;
The five then swore on If'grim's cursed head,
Bruin the Bear should reign in Noble's stead;
And at Aix-la-Chapelle, upon the throne,
Should bind his temples with the golden crown.
If any one their trait'rous scheme withstood,
Bound to the King by fealty or blood,

Him should my Sire with words or bribes persuade,
Or, failing these, call force in to his aid.
I learnt the bus'ness in the strangest way;
The Badger had been drinking hard one day,



Th' uxorious blockhead, though it risked his life,
Told the whole secret to his wheedling Wife;
He bound her though to solemn secrecy,
And the Fool fancied that he safe would be.

But what are woman's vows? His Wife and mine
 Gossips had been together from lang syne;
 And when they met, the former, as with child
 Of her grand secret, nodded, smirked and smil'd;
 And having made my Wife first swear an oath,
 By the three Kings, and by her faith and troth,
 Never to breathe one word to mortal soul,
 Relieved her lab'ring bosom of the whole.
 My Wife was horror-struck, and straightway she
 Felt it her duty to tell all to me;
 Of course; for Moralists have all one mind,
 That inofficious vows can never bind.
 I saw at once—what man of sense would not?—
 The wickedness and folly of the plot:
 All living Beasts had gone unto the Dogs,—
 And fared, as formerly those stupid Frogs;
 Who with their ceaseless croakings worried Heaven,
 To change the King who first to them was given;
 His tranquil reign inglorious they deemed;
 They long'd for greater freedom, as it seemed;
 Then o'er them to preside Heav'n sent the Stork;
 Like a Legitimate he set to work;
 All who opposed he banished from the State,
 Decreed their lands and chattels confiscate;
 And while he thus enrich'd himself, he swore
 'Twas all to benefit the Church and Poor;
 While love for law and order he professed,
 Freedom in speech and action were repressed;
 And none were heard, or suffered, to repine;
 Thus did he prove he ruled by Right Divine.
 The poor Fools curst their self-invited fate,
 And wished the old King back; but 'twas too late.”
 Thus spake the Fox; and lied at ev'ry word,
 That all who heard him wondered as they heard.

“The State,” he thus proceeded, “had been lost ;
But ’twas Your safety, Sire, concerned me most :
The risks I ran to save You were immense,
And merited some better recompense.
Bruin’s fell mind I knew ; his temper curst,
His love of cruelty forebode the worst ;
Our lives, if he had chanced to get the sway,
Had not been worth the purchase of a day.
Our present King enjoys a diff’rent fame ;
Noble alike by nature and by name.
A sad and stupid change indeed it were—
A royal Lion for a clownish Bear !
Thus with myself I oft communed in thought ;
And means to ward this evil daily fought.

“One thing was certain ; if my Sire retain’d
This vast amount of wealth at his command,
Hosts of Allies together he might bring,
Would win his game, while we should lose our King.
And now my chiefest study was to trace
This secret treasure to its hiding place ;
Then bear it safe away, if so I might ;
Of this I dreamed by day and schemed by night.
Wherever now the crafty Old-one went,
Through field or forest where his steps he bent,
Whether in cold, or heat, or wet, or dry,
Close on his track incessantly was I.

“But Chance at length, or rather, Heaven’s high
will,
Procured me what I could not gain by skill.
Concealed behind a bush, one summer’s day,
Chewing the cud of bitter thought, I lay ;
Grinding all sorts of plans within my pate,
This treasure to secure, and save the State :
When from a fissure in the rocks hard by,

I saw my Father creep out stealthily ;
With expectation breathless I lay hid :
While, cautious, he looked round on ev'ry side ;
Thought himself safe, perceiving no one near,
And then began his games, as you shall hear.



The hole with sand he filled, and all around
He levelled skilfully th' adjacent ground ;
Nor was this all ; before he left the place,
All marks of footsteps he contrived t' efface :
Bent to the earth, he swished his tail about,
And smoothed it o'er with his elastic snout.

Ah! truly was my Sire a wondrous Man!
The wide World now may match him, if it can!
How many quips and cranks and wanton wiles
I learnt from him, most cunning of old Files!

“But to proceed. He quickly left the spot;
‘Here then the treasure is concealed,’ I thought.
I hastened to the rocks with eager soul,
Soon scratched away the sand and cleared the hole,
And down into the cleft with caution stole. }
Good Heav’ns! what precious things there met my
fight!

What masses of red gold and silver white!
The oldest present here, I’m bold to say,
Ne’er saw such stores as I beheld that day.
My Wife I brought the glorious fight to see;
To move the treasure hourly laboured we;
And sooth, it was a work of toil and pain;
We’d nought to help us,—neither cart nor wain.
My good Wife held out bravely to the last,
Till we in safety had the treasure plac’d.

“Meanwhile my Sire consulted day by day,
With those who fought our Sov’reign to betray.
For dread and horror now your souls prepare,
Their machinations base whilst I lay bare.
By Ifegrim and Bruin briefs were sent,
To raise Recruits and stir up discontent;
All were allured in Bruin’s host to serve;
Whom lucre might from duty tempt to swerve.
And that the call they sooner might obey,
They were assured a month’s advance of pay.
These briefs my Father round the country bore;
He deemed in safety he had left his store;
Though if with all his friends he’d searched for ever,
He ne’er had found a solitary stiver.

No pains he spared to further the design ;
 Sought ev'ry spot between the Elbe and Rhine,
 And many Converts to the cause he made ;—
 Who largely promises may soon persuade.

“At length the summertime once more was come ;
 With it returned my weary Father home ;
 Of troubles and mishaps he'd much to tell,
 Of many hair-breadth 'scapes by field and fell ;
 How for his life he had been forced to flee,
 Among the towered heights of Saxony ;
 Where wicked hunters chased him out of spite,
 With horse and hound, from morn till starry night ;
 That scarce he saved his skin by rapid flight. }
 With joy then to his Comrades he display'd
 The long list of Adherents he had made.
 Bruin was charmed, and, with the other four,
 Studied th' important writing o'er and o'er.
 Twelve hundred Souls of If'grim's savage Clan,
 Had pledged themselves to join him to a man,
 With sharp and hungry teeth and open jaws,
 They promised to support King Bruin's cause.
 The Cats and Bears enrolled without a bribe ;
 And all the Glutton, all the Badger tribe ;
 But, less devoted, or more cautious, they
 Had bargained for the month's advance of pay.
 All these and many more had sworn t' attend,
 At the first summons which the Bear should send.
 By me this plot was foiled : but thanks be given
 Not unto me for this ; but unto Heaven !

“My Sire now hastened to the cave once more ;
 Eager to tell his cherished treasure o'er :
 But, though the firmest faith possessed his mind,
 The more he sought the more he did not find.
 Vain were his labors, his regrets as vain,

Doomed never to behold his wealth again.
Three days disconsolate he roamed the wood,
Shunning his mates, and never tasting food ;
The fourth—sad day for me ! although his Heir—
He hanged himself from grief and sheer despair.

“ Thus have I done, thus suffered, good my
Lord,

To countervail a plot my soul abhorr'd.
Though for my pains this strange return I get,
The steps I took I never can regret.
If 'grim and Bruin sit at Your right hand,
Doomed as a Traitor the poor Fox must stand ;
But yet this thought shall consolation bring ;
I lost my Father, but I saved my King.
The ill I've done be buried in my grave,
My name this one good deed from infamy shall save.”

He ceased : a murmur ran through all the crowd ;
But what all thought, none dared to speak aloud.
The King and Queen both felt a strong desire
This wondrous store of treasure to acquire ;
They call'd the Fox aside and bade him say
In what place he had stowed it all away.

Though Reynard found it hard his joy to hide,
Still in desponding accents he replied ;
“ Why should I tell this secret to my Lord,
Who dooms my death and ever doubts my word ?
In Traitors he prefers his trust to place,
Whose triumph is achieved in my disgrace.”

“ Nay,” said the Queen, impatient ; “ nay, not so !
His vengeance just my Lord may yet forego,
The past he may forgive, may e'en forget ;
And you may live a life of credit yet ;
Could he but have some certain pledge, that you
Would for the future loyal prove and true.”

“Ah gracious Queen!” the wily Fox replies,
 “Let me find favor in King Noble’s eyes;
 Through your mild influence let me pardoned be,
 And hence depart in life and member free;
 Amply will I atone for all my crimes;
 Nor King nor Kaifer lives of modern times
 Can truly boast one half the wealth to own,
 Which I will lay before my Sov’reign’s throne.”

“Believe him not!” the angry Monarch cries;
 “Whose lips ne’er open but to utter lies.
 If he would teach you how to cheat or thieve,
 His words you then might readily believe.”

And the Queen said—“Let not my Lord be
 wroth :

Though Reynard’s life ill augurs for his truth;
 Yet surely this time hath he spoken sooth. }

His Father and his Uncle hath he not
 Shown to have shared in that accursed plot?
 He might have sure devised some stratagem,
 While blaming others, to exon’rate them.
 And if he do speak truth, how great a prize
 We lose, if now with him his secret dies.”

Awhile the Monarch paused, immersed in thought,
 In his soul’s depths as though he counsel fought.
 Then answered—“If you think ’twere better so,
 Nor deem that ill from such a course may flow,
 I may pursue the bent of my own mind,
 To mercy more than vengeance still inclin’d.
 The Culprit I will pardon, and restore,
 As a new man, to all he held before.
 This time I trust him—let him though take heed—
 This time I trust him, for the last indeed;
 For by my Father’s crown I make a vow,
 If with false tidings he deceive me now,

On all who claim his kin, where'er they be,
My wrath shall fall, e'en to the tenth degree,
In torture shall they perish utterly."

}

Seeing the King so easily was sway'd,
Reynard took heart and spake out undismay'd:
"To lie now were most criminal, no doubt;
When I should be so speedily found out."

Thus the sly Knave the Royal pardon won,
Both for his Father's treasons and his own.
Freed from the gallows and his Enemies,
Great was his joy nor less was their surprise.

"Noblest of Kings!" he cried, "and best of Lords!
My gratitude is all too vast for words.
But the warm thanks of this poor heart are given
To You, and your august Spouse, next to Heaven.
My life You spare; my wealth is but Your due;
For life and wealth belong alike to You.
The favors heaped on my unworthy self
Far, far outweigh all thoughts of paltry pelf.
To You as a free gift I now make o'er
The whole of good King Emmerick's mighty store.
Then listen, Sire, while I its hiding place
By certain signs enable You to trace.

"Now mark me! Far in Flanders, to the east,
There lies a wild inhospitable waste;
There grows a single copse named Husterlow,
Near it the waters of a fountain flow,
Called Krekelburn; these names remember well;
Why they're so call'd is more than I can tell.
It is a savage and romantic scene,
Where foot of Beast hath ne'er or rarely been;
There dwell alone the Owl, the Bat, the Jay;
And there it was I stow'd my wealth away.
Remember, Sire, close each to each they lie,

The copse, and the spring Krekelburn hard by.
 Yourself and Royal Spouse had best go there,
 It were not safe to send a Messenger ;
 'Twere far too great a risk to trust a Stranger ;
 And with the truest Friend not much less danger.
 Now further mark my words : at Krekelburn
 Sharp to the left you take a sudden turn ;
 A stone's throw off two birches shall you see,
 Their penfile branches drooping gracefully.
 Directly up to these then must you go ;
 There delve forthwith ; the treasure lies below.
 At first but moss you'll find about the roots,
 But soon your toil will meet with richer fruits ;
 Heaps of red gold you'll find ; in ingots part,—
 Part fabricated by the Goldsmith's art ;
 Among it will be seen King Emmerick's crown,
 Which silly Bruin hoped to call his own ;
 And many a costly chain and jewel rare,
 Far more than I can reckon up, are there.
 Then, gracious Sire ! when all this wealth You see,
 Will You not think with kindness on poor Me ?
 ' That honest Fox ! ' methinks I hear You say,
 ' With so much skill to store his wealth away !
 ' My blessing be upon him day and night ! ' ”
 Thus Reynard spake, the wily Hypocrite.

And the King answered : “ You must with me go,
 Or ne'er shall I find out this Husterlow ?
 Of Lubeck and Cologne I've oft heard tell,
 Of Paris also and Aix-la-Chapelle ;
 But never yet of Husterlow before,
 Or Krekelburn, until this very hour.
 How may I know that this is not again
 A pure invention of your subtle brain ? ”

Sadly perplexed and daunted sore to find

Suspicion haunting still the Royal mind ;
" Ah, Sire ! " exclaimed the Fox, " ' tis all the same
To hang a Dog as give him a bad name !
A trip through Flanders sure is no such burden !
' Tis not a pilgrimage beyond the Jordan !
It is enough to drive one to despair,
To find one's word so doubted every where !
Haply there may be some one here in Court
Who may avouch the truth of my report . "

He looked around and call'd the Hare,—who
came—

A timid terror trembling through his frame.

" Come hither, Master Pufs ! " the Fox began ;
" Hold up your head, and look, Sir, like a man !
The King desires to learn if aught you know
Of either Krekelburn or Husterlow :
Speak truly now, on your allegiance oath . "

And the Hare answered—" Sire ! I know them
both.

Far off in Flanders in the waste they lie,
Husterlow first, and Krekelburn close by :
Husterlow is the name they give a copse,
Where crookback Simon had his working shops ;
He coined false money ; that was years ago.
It is a dreary spot, as well I know ;
From cold and hunger there I've suffered much,
When flying from the cruel Beagles' clutch . "

Quoth Reynard then ; " Enough ! you may retire.
I trust I now have satisfied you, Sire ! "
And the King said to Reynard ; " Be content :
My doubts were not to wound your feelings meant . "
(He thought indeed by what the Hare had stated
The Fox's tale was quite corroborated.
And thus it is that many a man of sense

Reynard the Fox.



Will deal with the effect of evidence.)

“But you must with us go; for much I doubt
That else I ne’er shall find the treasure out.”

“Dread Sire!” rejoined the Fox; “to go with You
Would be a source of pride and pleasure too!

But, sooth to speak, my company would be
A cause of sorrow to Your Majesty.
I hoped to 'scape exposure of this evil;
But I must speak the truth and shame the Devil.

“How Isegrim turned Monk, Sire, you have heard;
'Twas more to serve his belly, than the Lord.
Soon were his Brethren weary of his tricks;
Almost starved out; he ate enough for six;
And caring nothing for his wretched soul,
For flesh on fast-days would he rave and howl.
At last, one afternoon, about Mid-Lent,
He sent for me, and straight to him I went:
And I must needs confess that I was stagger'd
To see him look so sadly gaunt and haggard.
He thus entreated me, with tearful eyes,
By all our loves, by all our kindred ties;
'Get me some food, or I shall die of famine!
'Sweet Coz, you see the wretched plight I am in.'
My heart was softened; for he is my kin;
And in my weakness I committed sin:
To the next town I hied and stole some meat;
Placed it before the Wolf, and he did eat.
But for my goodness ill was I repaid,
By this vile Judas treach'rously betray'd.
And I, for this offence, more heinous than
All my past crimes, lie 'neath the Church's ban.
But now I have escaped my threatened doom,
I thought, with Your kind leave, to wend to Rome;
By penitence and alms I there might hope
To purchase absolution of the Pope;
Thence, having kissed his Holiness's toe,
I purposed to Jerusalem to go;
With cockle hat and staff and sandal shoon;
Why should a Fox not take a Palmer's tone?

Returned, from all fins purged, I might with pride
Then take my place, Sire, at Your honored side.
But if perchance I ventured this to-day,
Would not the pious Scandal-mongers say ;
' Lo ! how the King seeks Reynard's company,
' Whom he so lately had condemned to die ;
' And he still excommunicated too !'
But judge You, Sire, what may be best to do."

" Heav'ns !" cried the King, " how should I
know all this ?

It were a fin to keep you here, I wis ;
The Hare, or some one else, can shew the way :
You have Our leave to go without delay.
For worlds I'd not your pilgrimage prevent ;
Since I believe you truly penitent.
May Heaven, which alone your heart can read,
Prosper your purpose and your journey speed !"





CHAPTER THE SIXTH.

The Relapse.

THUS Reynard gained once more his Sov'reign's
grace :

Who slowly mounting up to his high place,
Prepared t' address the meeting from his throne ;
Bade them be silent all, and all sit down,
After their rank, ranged on the verdant sward ;
On either hand drew up the Royal Guard ;
At the Queen's side th' undaunted Reynard stood ;
And thus the Monarch spake in thoughtful mood :

“ Be still and listen, all ye Beasts and Birds,
Both small and great, hear and attend Our words !
Here, in Our mercy, see where Reynard stands,
Late doomed to suffer by the Hangman's hands.
But now for certain reasons, grave and high,
Touching Ourselves, Our crown and dignity,

And, at the intercession of Our Queen,
 Restored to grace and favor hath he been;
 And free We here pronounce him, from this date,
 In life and limb, in person and estate.
 In Our protection him and his We take,
 Desiring they be honored, for Our sake:
 And furthermore, it is Our Royal will,
 Henceforth of him none dare to utter ill;
 Convinced, as We his former faults forgive,
 In future he a better life will live.
 To-morrow will he leave his hearth and home,
 And start upon a pilgrimage for Rome;
 Thence will he make, as he doth now aver,
 A journey to the Holy Sepulchre;
 And then return, his sins confessed and shriven,
 Completely reconciled to Us and Heaven."

He ceased. The Cat, in anger and despair,
 Sought out his dear Allies, the Wolf and Bear:
 "Our labor's lost;" he cried, "ah! well-a-day,
 The very Devil is there here to pay!
 From this curst place would I were safe away!
 If Reynard once get power, be sure that he
 His fierce revenge will wreak on all us three.
 Of my right eye already am I left;
 Alas! the other will not long be left."

"Woe's me! what shall we do?" exclaimed the
 Bear.

"Let us," said If'grim, "to the Throne repair!
 Sure 'tis the strangest thing that e'er was seen!"
 Forthwith they knelt before the King and Queen:
 For justice loud they spoke, or rather stammered;
 For justice, inarticulately clamored.

But angrily the King broke forth:—"My Lords!
 Either you did not hear, or mark my words.

It is my pleasure Reynard to forgive;
It is a branch of my prerogative;
For is it not to every Schoolboy known,
Mercy's the brightest jewel of the Crown?"

His mighty wrath had now to fury risen;
He bade them both be seized and cast in prison;
Deeming they still might plot, if left at large,
The treasons, laid by Reynard to their charge.

The Fox was now well paid for all his pains;
Himself in favor, and his Foes in chains:
Nay more—he from the King contrived to win
The grant of a square-foot of Bruin's skin;
He vowed—and never could enough extol it,—
It was the very thing to make a wallet.

Thus was he for his pilgrim-journey suited;
But liking not to make it quite bare-footed,
He sued the Queen; "May't please your Majesty,
Your own devoted Pilgrim now am I;
The road I have to go is rough and long,
And I in health am any thing but strong;
It greatly would protect my tender toes,
Saving your presence, if I had some shoes.
Now Isgrim the Wolf hath got two pair;
Stout-built and strong; and one he well may spare;
It cannot incommode him much to lose them,
Since he has no occasion now to use them.
Speak for me, gracious Madam, to the King,
He will not sure deny so small a thing.
Dame Gieremund, too, cannot be averse
To let me have the loan of two of hers;
As she'll not see her Lord some time to come,
Like a good Housewife, she will stay at home."

The Queen replied, she thought it was but fair
That each of them should let him have a pair:

And Reynard thanked her with his best of bows,
Saying; "I promise, if I get the shoes,
Your Majesty shall have my daily pray'rs,
That Heaven preserve you free from fretting cares;
Besides, what holy relics back I bring,
You shall be sure to share them with the King."

He had his wish: from Isgrim's fore paws
Two shoes they stripped him off, both skin and claws;
And Gieremund, his next to widowed Dame,
As to her hinder feet, they served the same.

Now while the Wolf and Bear together lie
In prison and in pain, and wish to die;
With shoes and wallet fitted out, the Fox
Draws near to Gieremund, whom thus he mocks;
"Look, best and dearest one, these shoes, you see,
Fit just as though they had been made for me!
Though you have wished me ill in days bygone,
Such well-timed kindness can for all atone.
Who would have thought, a few short hours ago,
To see me honored and accoutred so?
But Fortune's wheel is ever on the move;
And what is now depressed soon mounts above.
Act on this maxim, and you baffle Fate;
Hope, when in trouble; fear, when fortunate.
Whene'er to Rome I get, or cross the sea,
My heart untravelled with my Friends will be;
And you the largest portion shall obtain
Of those Indulgences I hope to gain."

Poor Gieremund meanwhile in torture lay,
And scarce could muster strength enough to say;
"This hour is thine, and we must needs submit;
But there may come a day of reck'ning yet."

Thus Isgrim and Bruin both remained
Wounded, disgraced, imprisoned and enchained;

And Reynard's triumph seemed complete to be;—
Although he grieved that Tybalt still was free.

When morning came, the Hypocrite arose,
And first he greased, and then he donned his shoes;
Next to the Royal levee hastening,
To make his congé, thus addressed the King;

“Your Servant, Sire, your notice would engage
Ere he sets out on his long pilgrimage.
Sad is my lot: the Church's ban hangs o'er me,
A dreary, dang'rous journey lies before me:
'Twould give me hope, and confidence of heart
To have your Chaplain's blessing ere I start;
Success would then my onward steps attend,
And bring my travels to a happy end.”

Now Noble's private Chaplain was the Ram;
A gentle Brute, and Bellyn was his name;
The King, who of his services was chary,
Employed him also as his Secretary.
Him now he bade come forth and thus address'd;
“Speak over Reynard,—'tis his own request,—
Some holy words, his deep remorse t' assuage,
And cheer him on his lonely pilgrimage;
He goes, you know, to Rome; then o'er the sea;
And by your blessing sanctified would be;
Then, having hung his wallet by his side,
Give him a Palmer's staff his steps to guide.”

And Bellyn answered thus; “My gracious Lord,
What Reynard has avowed you surely heard;
He owns he still is excommunicate;
And truly I lament his wretched state;
But should I do the thing you now require,
I might incur my worthy Bishop's ire;
The matter easily might reach his ear;
And he could punish me, and would, I fear.

To Reynard, certes, I with nothing ill;
 And gladly would perform my Sov'reign's will;
 For this, all things in reason would I venture,
 Could I be fure to 'scape my Bishop's censure:
 But the good Prelate is an awful Man,
 And such a strict Disciplinarian;
 Besides, there are th' Archdeacon and the Dean"—
 The King no longer could contain his spleen,—
 "What," he exclaimed, "boots all this idle prate?
 I asked for deeds, not words, Sir Woolypate."
 And then he swore, and loudly, at the Ram,
 Saying, "Are you aware, Sir, who I am?
 Nor Priest nor Pope shall in my realm have sway;
 I look My Subjects shall their King obey.
 And whether you wish Reynard well or ill
 Can have no influence on My Royal will.
 It is my pleasure he should go to Rome;
 May be 'tis yours he should remain at home."

Astounded by the Monarch's stern reproof,
 The poor Ram trembled to his very hoof;
 And straight he took his book and 'gan to read
 A blessing over Reynard's sinful head;
 But little did that Wretch attend to it,
 Or little care about the benefit.

The blessing o'er, they bring his scrip and staff;
 How in his sleeve doth the false Pilgrim laugh;
 While down his cheeks dissembling tear-drops course,
 As though his heart were melting with remorse.
 And in good sooth he did feel some regret,
 That Tybalt was not in his power yet:
 He wished to cage him with the other Three,
 Whom he had brought to such extremity.
 He begged them all, and chiefly Isgrim,
 That they would pardon and would pray for him;

Then, with some fear still ling'ring at his heart,
Lest he might be detained, prepared to start.

And Noble, King of Beasts, much edified
To see such symptoms of repentance, cried ;
" Say, my good Reynard, prithee, why such haste ?
Some few hours with your Friends you sure may waste."



" Nay, my kind Lord," said that false-hearted Loon,
" A good work ne'er can be commenced too soon.
Dismiss me, Sire ; th' important hour is come,
Big with the fate that Reynard leads to Rome."

The Monarch, taken in by Reynard's art,
Gave him his gracious license to depart;
And bade th' assembled Barons of his Court
The Pilgrim a short distance to escort.
The Wolf and Bear 'scaped this humiliation;
And from their fetters forged some consolation.

To the King's favor quite restored again,
Reynard sets forth with all that lordly train,
Upon his pious journey to be shriven,—
Much the same road that Lawyers go to Heaven;—
Pleased to have brought the King to such a pass,
Led by the nose as easy as an Ass.
Honored was he and waited on by those
Who even now had been his bitter Foes.
Nor could he yet let his old tricks alone;
But turning back he knelt before the Throne,
Kissed the King's hand, and cried;—"Ah, dearest Lord!
Vouchsafe to let me speak one parting word:
Remember what great int'rests are at stake,
And of those Traitors an example make:
Some acts of mercy Reason will condemn;
Your People suffer, if You pardon them."

And then with downcast look away he went,
And all the bearing of a Penitent.

The King broke up his Court without delay;
Then to his royal palace took his way:
And those who, to their shame, and Reynard's pride,
His progress had some way accompanied,
Now took their leave and hastened to depart.
Meanwhile the Rogue so well had plied his art,
Insisting on the blessings of repentance,
He'd softened not a few of his Attendants;
And specially the tender-hearted Hare
From sympathetic tears could not forbear.

Him now the cunning Fox accosted thus ;
“ And must we part indeed, dear Cousin Puffs ?
If you and Bellyn could persuaded be
A little further yet to go with me,
'T would be an act of kindness on your part,
And comfort much my poor afflicted heart.
How greatly to my credit 'twill redound
If I in such society am found ;
Pleasant Companions are ye both, I ken,
And, what's far better, honest, gentle men ;
Ne'er doing wrong, you others' wrongs forgive,
And, as I lately did, you always live,
Of grass and herbs and leaves you make your food,
And never soil your guiltless teeth with blood ;
Hence are your consciences serene and quiet ;—
Such Good results from vegetable diet.”

And thus into the snare he laid they fell :
A little flattery sometimes does well.
To Malepartus, journeying on, they came ;
When thus the wily Fox addressed the silly Ram ;

“ Dear Bellyn, will you tarry here a little ?
You must, by this time, surely want some victual ;
And hereabouts you'll find enough to eat ;
The herbage is particularly sweet,
In fact we rather of our pastures vaunt ;
I'll just take Puffy in to see his Aunt ;—
Poor Soul ! she sits alone disconsolate,
And mourning over my unhappy fate ;
And when she hears that I to Rome must go,
'Twill cause her quite an ecstasy of woe.
Puffy, I know, for his dear Uncle's sake,
Will to his Aunt the sad news gently break.”

And thus, to carry out his own vile ends,
The Fox contrived to separate the Friends.

Pufs entered with him ; when—omen of ill !
 His footsteps stumbled on the very fill ;
 But Reynard smiled, and they passed onward, where
 His vixen Wife and cubby Children were.
 How Ermelyne rejoiced to see her Lord
 In safety to her longing arms restored !
 She'd suffered much anxiety and pain,
 Left by his wrathful Foes he should be slain,
 Or a close pris'ner for his life remain,
 And seeing him decked out with scrip and staff,
 She scarce knew whether first to cry or laugh,
 So great her joy and wonder : thus she spoke ;
 " Reynie, my Love ; my heart had almost broke ;
 How glad I am you're come ! Where *have* you been ?
 And what *does* all this masquerading mean ? "

And thus the Fox replied—" Ah, dearest Wife !
 But narrowly have I escaped with life :
 My Foes were powerful, and I was weak ;
 I had the halter round my very neck ;
 But our good King, with that peculiar sense
 That marks all Sov'reigns, saw my innocence ;
 And, as a testimonial to my worth,
 In pious Palmer's weeds has sent me forth ;
 My character without the slightest stain ;
 The Wolf and Bear as Hostages remain ;
 And master Pufs, you see, has by the King
 Been giv'n to me as a peace-offering :
 For the King said—' Reynard, you see that Hare,
 ' Yon trembling Coward, who stands crouching there ;
 ' That is the wretch by whom you've been betray'd.'
 And for his treason he shall now be paid."

Pufs heard these threat'ning words with mortal fear ;
 They seemed to ring a death-knell in his ear ;
 Confused and scared he strove in haste to fly,

But Reynard darted on him viciously,
And clutched him by the throat; Pufs shrieked amain, }
“ Help, Bellyn, help ! ” he cried, and cried again, }
“ Help ! or by this false Pilgrim I am slain.” }

But long he did not cry : for Reynard’s teeth
Soon cut his windpipe, and let out his breath.



Thus did this curfed and incarnate Fiend
Betray and murder his too-trusting Friend.

“ Come now,” he said, “ to supper let us hafte ;
Our Friend is fat and delicate to tafte ;
The Simpleton was ne’er of ufe before ;
To make him fo long time ago I fwore.

He wished to wound, but was afraid to strike ;
So perish every one who does the like ! ”

Then the whole Family sat down to sup ;
The Hare was skinned and shared and eaten up :
The Vixen greatly the repast enjoyed,
And oft exclaimed, as with the bones she toyed ;
“ Heaven bless the King and Queen ! how good they are,
To cater for us such delicious fare.”

“ For this time,” said the Fox, “ it may suffice ;
I hope ere long a nobler sacrifice ;
That I may let the whole world plainly see,
None injures Reynard with impunity.”

Quoth Ermelyne—“ Dear Lord, I prithee tell,
How you have got away so safe and well.”

“ ’Twould take,” said he, “ full many a weary hour
To show how I escaped the Law’s grim pow’r ;
T’ explain the tricks, I played my Enemies,
And how I dammed—with dust—King Noble’s eyes.
In sooth the bonds that now our hearts unite,
Though we are sworn as Lieges, are but slight ;
And when the truth shall break upon his mind,
Within no bounds his rage will be confin’d.
Me if again within his power he hold
No wealth can save of silver or of gold ;
No chance of mercy left, my fate will be
To hang like fruit, upon the gallows tree.

“ Let us, dear Love, at once to Swabia fly ;
Unknown by all, perdue we there may lie ;
A safe asylum we are sure to find,
And heaps of provender of every kind ;
Fowls, geese, hares, rabbits ; butter, cheese, and cream ;
Birds in the air and fishes in the stream.
There far from faithless Friends and furious Foes
Our life will ebb in leisure and repose ;

In charity with all we'll pass our days,
And bring our Children up in Virtue's ways.

“For, dearest Chuck, to speak without disguise,
I've told a most infernal pack of lies :
A tale I forged about King Emmerick's store ;
And that 'twas hid at Krekelburn I swore.
If they go thither, as they will no doubt,
They soon must find the whole deception out ;
And when 'tis all discovered, you may form
Some faint idea of how the King will storm,
How he will swear ; what vengeance he will vow ;
And sure I feel that what he swears, he'll do.
You may suppose what fibs I told, dear Wife ;
Ne'er was I so put to it in my life :
Again to lie were not the lightest use,
And therefore would admit of no excuse.

“But happen now what may, one thing is plain ;
Nothing shall tempt me back to Court again :
Not for the wide world's wealth, from north to south,
I'd thrust my head into the Lion's mouth.”

Him answered thus the forrowing Ermelyne ;
“And why should we be Outcasts, Husband mine ?
Why should we leave our comfortable home,
Abroad, like Rogues and Vagabonds, to roam ?
Here known by all, by all respected too,
Your Friends are faithful and your Vassals true ;
And certainties against uncertainties
To change, is neither provident nor wise.
Against our will we cannot hence be torn ;
Our strong-hold here might laugh a siege to scorn.
Let the King hither come with all his Host :
He'll have his journey for his pains at most.
Of our escape I entertain no doubt ;
So many ways we have of getting out.

The King is strong and we are weak ; but yet
 We to his pow'r can well oppose our wit.
 For this I have no fears : but for your vow
 To undertake a pilgrimage just now,
 That chills my heart with icy fears I own :
 What can I do, left friendless and alone ?”

To her thus Reynard ; “ Sweet, you have prevailed ;
 ’Twas but a moment that my courage failed :
 His threats are idle, and my fears are vain ;
 Shadows avaunt ! Reynard’s himself again !
 As for my vow—better to be forsworn,
 Than live the wretched finger-mark of scorn :
 Vows, when compulsory, bind not the least ;
 I’ve heard that doctrine taught by many a Priest :
 For my part, it may to the devil go ;—
 I speak not of the doctrine, but my vow.

“ So be it as you wish. I stay at home ;
 For what on earth have I to do at Rome ?
 And for my promised journey to Jerufalem,
 I only named the project to bamboozle ’em ;
 Nor if, instead of the one oath I swore,
 I’d sworn a dozen, would I go the more.
 With you and my dear Children will I stay,
 And get out of my scrape as best I may.
 And though the King should have me in his clutch,
 Perchance it may not help him over-much ;
 I may succeed, as I have done ere now,
 To fit a Fool’s cap on his Royal brow :
 At least I’ll try : the vow I freely make,
 I dare be sworn, I think, I shall not break.”

Bellyn meanwhile had all impatient grown ;
 Had ate his fill, and wanted to be gone ;
 “ Pufs ! are you ready ? It is getting late.”
 Thus he calls out at Malepartus’ gate ;

And softly at the first, then louder knocks :
When to the door proceeds the wily Fox,
And says—"You must excuse our cousin Pufs ;
You can return ; he'll pass the night with us."

"Methought," replied the Ram, "I heard him cry,
'Help! Bellyn, help! oh, help me or I die!'
I trust no ill could here my Coz befall."

"I thought," said Reynard, "you'd have heard him call ;
For in good sooth he made a mighty din ;
I'll tell you how it happened—just step in."

But Bellyn's heart was not quite free from fear ;
So he said, "Thank ye ; I am better here."

Then wily Reynard answered ; "Very well !
You shall hear how the accident befell.
I had just told my wife about my vow—
My promised pilgrimage to Rome, you know—
When she, alas ! good soul, was so cast down,
That with the shock she fell into a swoon.
Our simple Friend, alarmed, began to cry,
'Help! Bellyn, help!—help, or my Aunt will die.'"

"Certes," said Bellyn, "he did loudly call."
"He did," quoth Reynard. "Now I've told you all.
As for my inj'ring him ;" the False One said ;
"I could not hurt a hair of that dear head."

I would be torn to pieces, limb by limb,
Sooner than even think of harming him.

"And now," quoth he, "to business. Yesterday,
The King desired me, as I came away,
That I, by letter, should communicate
My thoughts on certain grave affairs of State.
This letter, with some other papers too,
I beg you'll carry back to Court with you.
I've giv'n the King some excellent advice,
Which, though I say it, is beyond all price."

While Pufs was resting from his weary jaunt,
 And talking old times over with his Aunt,
 I just contrived a spare half hour to snatch,
 And have drawn up a masterly despatch."

"I would with pleasure all your letters take ;"
 Said Bellyn, "but I fear the seals might break ;
 And I a serious censure should expect,
 Having no pouch the papers to protect."

"That's true, dear Nephew ;" answered Reynard, pat,
 "But we can very soon get over that :
 The wallet that they made of Bruin's skin,
 Will be the very thing to put them in ;
 'Tis strong and thick, and will the wet repel ;
 I've one within will suit me just as well ;
 And doubt not that your labor will be vain ;
 Some favor from the King, you'll sure obtain."

The silly Ram believed all Reynard said ;
 Then back into his house the Sly One sped,
 And in his wallet crammed the poor Hare's head ; }
 Next having thought how he might best prevent
 The Ram from finding out what 'twas he sent ;
 Unto the door returning, thus he spake ;
 "Here, Nephew, hang this wallet round your neck.
 In its contents I trust you will not pry ;
 'Twould prove a fatal curiosity.

The knots in a peculiar way are done,
 Which only to the King and me are known ;
 A mode that I invariably use,
 Whenever I transmit important news ;
 If the King sees the fastenings all right,
 The Messenger finds favor in his sight.

"Nay if a greater merit you desire ;
 And to preferment in the church aspire ;
 You have my fullest leave to tell the King,

The letters were of your imagining ;
That though the handy-work by me was done,
The whole idea was yours, and yours alone ;
So shall your mental powers be highly rated,
And you, no doubt, be duly elevated.
You'll rise to any station, that you wish, up ;
Be made a prebend or—who knows?—a bishop."

Who then so happy as that filly Ram?
He frisked and gamboled like a very lamb ;
And joyfully he cried ; " Now do I see
The love, dear Uncle, that you bear to me.
What credit will not this adventure bring !
How shall I be respected by the King !
That I such clever letters should indite—
I, who was ne'er considered over bright !
And all this pleasure and this honor too,
I've none to thank for, Uncle dear, but you.
No longer will I tarry. Let me see :—
You're sure that Pufs will not go back with me ?"

" Nay," answered Reynard, " that's impossible :
For, truth to speak, he's just now far from well ;
A cold he's got has settled in his head ;
He's had his gruel and is gone to bed :
His Aunt it is, this treatment doth advise ;
She's greatly skilled in all such remedies.
He'll follow speedily ; nay, I would swear
He'll be at Court as soon as you are there."

" Farewell, then ! " said the Ram, " no time I'll waste ,
Farewell ! " And off he started in great haste :
Travelled all night, the roads not being heavy,
And just arrived in time for the King's levée.

When the King saw him with the wallet on,
He motioned him he should approach the Throne,
Then said, while he held out his hand to kifs,

“Bellyn, you’re welcome back; but what means this?
Is not that Reynard’s wallet that you bear?
Methinks that I should know it any where.
I trust you left him safe and well in health;
I would not have him harmed for thrice his wealth.”

And Bellyn said; “Despatches, Sire, I bring
From Reynard greeting to my Lord the King;
To get them all complete we both combin’d;
And what he executed, I design’d.

For though the handy-work by him was done,
The whole idea was mine, and mine alone.
He tied the knots in a peculiar way,
Which you would understand, he bade me say.”

The King, perplexed, straight for the Beaver
sent,

He was a man for learning eminent;
Could read off-hand, and seldom stopped to spell;
Knew foreign tongues—and his own pretty well;
He acted for the King as Notary;
To read despatches oft employed was he;
Vast was his science; Castor was his name;
And at the Royal bidding now he came.
And Tybalt was commanded to assist,
The fastnings of the wallet to untwist.

The strings untied, the pouch was op’d; when lo!
A sight of dread and agonizing woe!
Forth Castor drew the poor Hare’s mangled head;
“This call you a despatch, forsooth?” he said;
“I own it fairly puzzles my poor brains;
Heav’n only knows, for I don’t, what it means.”

Both King and Queen were startled and distress’d;
And Noble’s head sunk down upon his breast;
The only words he said distinctly were—
“Oh! Reynard! Reynard! would I had you here!”

The Relapse.



Then long a stern and solemn silence kept ;
Till, by degrees, along the circle crept
Th' astounding tidings that the King had wept. }
At length his grief found utterance, and he spoke,
While his strong frame like to a Woman's shook ;—
“ He has deceived me ;—Me ! his King and Lord !
How could I trust the perjured Traitor's word ?
Oh ! day of shame ! where shall I hide my head ?
Disgraced ! dishonored ! would that I were dead ! ”

He seemed quite frantic ; and the Courtly Crew
Felt it their duty to seem frantic too.

But Leopardus, near the throne who stood,—
A Prince he was, and of the Royal blood—
Thus spake ; “ My gracious Liege, I cannot see
Why You and our good Queen thus grieved should be.
Banish such gloomy feelings, and take heart ;
Despair was never yet a Monarch’s part.
As You, Sire, who so prudent ? who so strong ?
Remember too, a King can do no wrong.”

“ Alas ! ” cried Noble, “ it is even so ;
And this it is adds sharpness to my woe.
’Tis not alone that I have been deceiv’d ;
For that, I might have well in private griev’d ;
But that the Wretch, to gain his wicked ends,
Has caused me do injustice to my Friends ;—
Bruin and If’grim, who in prison lie,
The Victims of his cursed villany.
Is’t not enough my soul to overwhelm,
That the two noblest Barons of my realm
Should be so punished, and for no offence,
But my blind trust in Reynard’s evidence.
Alas ! ’twas in an evil hour, I ween,
I heeded the persuasions of the Queen ;
She, in simplicity a very child,
By his false tongue was easily beguil’d,
And for his pardon did so warmly pray—
I should have been more firm—but I gave way.
Idle is all regret ; advice too late ;
For even Kings must sometimes bow to Fate.”

The Leopard answered, “ Sire, though you know best,
Haply I may a useful hint suggest.
Some comfort to the Wolf and Bear ’twould bring
To have the Ram as a peace-offering :

You heard him boldly, as a boast, declare,
'Twas he that counselled killing the poor Hare.
Thus shall you deal him forth a righteous fate,
And thus the injured Peers propitiate.
Then will we hunt the Fox through all the land,
And kill him,—if we catch him,—out of hand ;
For if he get but liberty of speech,
The very Devil will he over-reach.
In fine, until that crafty Brute is slain,
No respite from our griefs shall we obtain."

He ceased ; and Noble, King of Beasts, replies ;
" Your counsel pleases me, as just and wise.
Hasten and set th' imprisoned Barons free ;
In honor shall they take their state near me.
Be all the Council summoned : they shall learn
How foully that base Traitor is forsworn ;
How he and Bellyn killed the gentle Hare ;
How he traduced the loyal Wolf and Bear :
And, as you counsel, Bellyn and his Heirs
For ever I make o'er to them and theirs."

Then Leopardus went without delay
To where the Wolf and Bear in Prison lay.
Straight from their bonds by his commands released,
In soothing words the Twain he thus addressed.

" Hail, Noble Lords ! good tidings, lo, I bring !
Full pardon and free conduct from the King !
By law, you both have been condemned of treason ;
And law is the perfection of all reason ;
But since 'tis proved you're free of all offence,
You're freely pardoned, for your innocence.
And likewise in some measure to atone
For all the suff'rings you have undergone,
Bellyn and all his Tribe, the King declares,
Are given up to you and to your Heirs :

In grove or green whene'er you chance to meet them,
You have full privilege to kill and eat them.
Further, the King will lend his royal aid
To punish him by whom you've been betray'd;
The Fox and all his Kindred, to a man,
You've leave to take and torture, if you can.
These rights, which unto you the King doth yield,
Will all by his Successors be upheld;
And, in return, you from your souls will cast
All painful recollections of the past;
Raised to your old estate, afresh will swear
Loyal allegiance to the King to bear."

They took the pardon at the proffered price,
Bellyn the Simple fell a sacrifice:
And all his Kindred suffered too with him,
Victims to the fierce Clan of Ifegrim.
Eternal war was entered on that day;
The Wolves thenceforward made all Sheep their prey;
Hunting and worrying them by day and night;
They had the power, and therefore had the right.

The Monarch further solace yet imparts
To Ifegrim's and Bruin's wounded hearts,
By ordering a twelve-days' festival,
At which his Barons should be present all;
That so his Lieges might distinctly see
Those the King loved, should duly honored be.





CHAPTER THE SEVENTH.

The Outlawry.

THE Court was for the festival prepared ;
And all who came, the banquet freely shared ;
By day and night succeeded endless feasts ;
Was never such a gathering of Beasts ;
All to do homage to the Wolf and Bear,
Who in their present joy forgot past care.
Nor did the Guests do nought but feed like Brutes ;
The scene was varied with refined pursuits ;
The charms of music lent their soothing aid ;
The big drums thundered and the trumpets bray'd ;
The dance enlivened the convivial hall,
The courtly minuet and the common brawl ;
While day by day the sports afresh begin,
And day by day new Guests come trooping in.
To name them all would too much time engross ;
There came the erudite Rhinoceros :

Thick-skinned himself, he flayed the thin-skinned tribe,
 A savage Critic, though himself a Scribe;
 In all the gossip verfed of former times,
 He fashioned hift'ry into nurf'ry rhymes;
 Or, told in profe, made it seem all a sham,
 By cooking up his facts *à l'épigramme*.

Next the Hyæna, the good Bishop, came,
 His restless zeal for ever in a flame;
 With his devices the whole kingdom rang,
 So mixed they were of piety and slang:
 No Blood-hound e'er so quick a scent as he
 To track the tainted sons of Herefy;
 Not Gaul by Roman, nor by Spartan, Helot,
 Were used as they were by the reverend Prelate:
 Them with his pen he mangled sore; and would
 Have had them burnt by inches, if he could.
 He came; but not in over-cheerful mood,
 For at this time his thoughts could nought but brood
 On that accursed and deadly schism which taught
 That *in*, and not *by*, baptism Grace was caught.

There was Sir Nibble too, the long-haired Rat;
 Haggard and grim and sworn Foe to the Cat;
 Though he at one time, unless Rumor lied,
 Had wished to 'list himself on Tybalt's side;
 Hoped all past differences to efface,
 And in his favor to obtain a place.
 But when he found his fawning flatt'ry spurned,
 His fembled friendship into hate was turned;
 Where once he flavered, now he spat his spite,
 And shewed his rodent teeth and strove to bite;
 But Tybalt thought it prudent to determine
 To bide his time till he might crush the Vermin.

There too was Jocko seen, the long-armed Ape,
 Who was in mind ungainly as in shape;

The Outlawry.



Malice and fun in him so nicely blent,
When playful most, then most he mischief meant ;
He chattered nonsense with look so demure,
Most Folks would think—he must mean something fure ;
His very talents he would twist to ill,
For he could limn and draw with ease and skill ;

But, juſt to prove his power at grimaces,
Caricatured his beſt Friends to their faces.

To count them all, for ages would endure ;
But Reynard was not one of them, be ſure.
In watchful idleneſs he lurk'd at home,
That falſe pretended Palmer, bound for Rome.
To viſit Court he was too circumſpect ;
He knew what welcome he might there expect.
Safely at home himſelf he might applaud ;
But not ſo ſafely could appear abroad.

Meanwhile was held high junketing at Court ;
There all was mirth and jollity and ſport ;
Feaſting and gambling were there, night and day ;
And thoſe who came to ſtuff remained to play.
Full was the royal palace as Noah's ark ;
Jouſts were there held, and tourneys, in the park.
From his high place the King ſurveyed the whole,
And the vaſt tumult fill'd his mighty ſoul.

'Twas now the eighth day of the feſtival ;
The King was ſet at table in his hall,
His Peers around, and by his ſide his Queen ;
When lo ! the Rabbit ruſhed upon the ſcene !
Bunny the Mild, his face all ſmear'd with blood ;
And thus he ſpake, as panting there he ſtood :

“ Ah, Sire ! ah, hear me ! Lords and Gentles all !
Or ſome ſuch fate may ſome of you befall ;
What murderous wrongs from Reynard I've received ;
Too ſcandalous almoſt to be believed !
I paſſed by Malepartus yeſterday ;
My road in coming hither led that way ;
Dreſſed out in Pilgrim's habits there he ſate,
Seemed to be reading Matins at his gate.
I hurried on, in haſte to reach this Court,
Deeming Your ſummons, Sire, a ſafe eſcort.

When Reynard saw me, up he rose to meet me,
Intending as I deemed, to come and greet me :
When lo ! he seizes me behind my ears,
And my soft skin with his sharp talons tears ;
While to the earth with force he pressed me down ;
I verily believ'd my head was gone.



I struggled hard, and, thanks to Heav'n ! being light,
Just manag'd to get off by speed of flight.
I heard his curses falling down the wind ;
But on I sped and never look'd behind ;
And here I am, all mangled as you see ;
Ah, gracious Lord ! have pity on poor me !

If thus from Court we all may be debarr'd,
Of what avail shall be the King's safe-guard?
Oh! on the common ill in time reflect,
Nor let this Robber's crimes remain uncheck'd."

Scarce had he ended, when the noisy Crow,
Entering the Court, began his tale of woe;
And thus he spake; "Ah, gracious Lord and King!
Most melancholy news to You I bring;
For grief and sorrow scarcely can I speak;
For grief and sorrow sure my heart will break.
This morn, my Wife and I—my Wife, I say;
Alas! my Wife that was but yesterday!—
In search of food abroad prepared to fly,
Just as the dawn lit up the watchet sky;—
For scarce need I your Majesty inform,
The early Bird picks up the morning worm.—
Crossing, near Reynard's home, that blasted heath,
I saw a fight that took away my breath;
Himself lay there to all appearance dead;
Stiff were his limbs, his eyes turned in his head;
His tongue protruded from his open jaws;
Awe-struck I called aloud, with ample cause;
'Alack!' I cried, 'alack! and well-a-day!
He's dead and'—scarcely knew I what to say;
Loud did we both in lamentations join,
For my Wife mixed her clamorings with mine.
The body then I cautiously approached,
And with my beak the back and belly touched;
While she, poor Soul, perched boldly on his chin,
And, stooping down, his mouth she peered within;
Trusting some trace of life she might detect;
For little did she ought of ill expect:
But the base Wretch soon proved he was not dead;
For in a moment off he snapped her head!

With horror rooted to the spot was I;
And deemed upon the instant I should die.
Quick starts he up and makes a dash at me;
I 'scaped, I know not how, into a tree;
Unconscious terror must have winged my flight:
And thence I saw, oh heavens! what a sight!



Sooner, alas! would I have lost my life!
I saw the Murderer mangle my dear Wife;
Her tender flesh I saw his talons tear,
The crunching of her bones too could I hear.
So mad with hunger seem'd the Cannibal,
That he devoured flesh, feathers, bones and all!

That hour of anguish ne'er will be forgot !
 The Wretch now satiated left the spot ;
 And I alighted on that cursed ground,
 But nothing there save drops of gore I found,
 And these few feathers from my poor Wife's wing,
 Which here in Court, to prove my case, I bring.

" My tale is ended, Sire ! my task is done :
 I've humbly laid my griefs before the Throne.
 From his misdoings, all the Realm complains
 'Tis Reynard rules, and not the King that reigns.
 For those who have the pow'r such crimes to stem,
 And yet repress them not, encourage them.
 Forgive me if too bold in what I say ;
 But grief is voluble and will have way."

Now all the Court had heard these tales of woe,
 Both from the gentle Rabbit and the Crow.
 And much incensed was Noble, King of beasts,
 Who liked not this disturbance in his feasts.

Thus then he spake in angry tones though sad ;
 " Much have I borne with ; but this is too bad !
 In vain it seems that my behests are spoken ;
 My laws are outraged and my peace is broken.
 This Traitor has deceived me once before ;
 But never, never shall deceive me more !
 Nor my fault is't that such a Criminal
 Is still at large ; the Queen has done it all.
 I shall not be the last, as not the first,
 By woman's idle counsels to be curst.
 But if this rebel Thief go longer free,
 The name of justice will a mock'ry be.
 Take counsel then, my Lords, and do your best
 To rid our kingdom of this common Pest."

Pleased were the Bear and Wolf this speech to hear ;
 And thought their hour of vengeance now was near ;

But prudently were silent, seeing both
The King so much disturbed and deeply wroth.

At length the Queen in gentle accents spake;
"Do not, dear Lord, your plans too rashly make;
Calm dignity will best assert the Right;
Of angry words th' effect is oft but slight.
Men oft blame Others their own guilt to hide;
Justice demands to hear the other side;
Of those who're loudest in his absence, some,
If he were present, would perchance be dumb.
For Reynard; skilful, wise and wary still
I knew him, and suspected nought of ill.
All I advised was with the best intent,
Though the result has prov'd so different.
From all I ever heard or understood,
If bad his deeds, yet his advice was good.
Behoves us to remember in this case
His num'rous Followers and powerful Race.
With over-haste affairs but badly speed;
But what your Royal will shall have decreed,
That shall your faithful Subjects execute;
And thus ripe counsels yield their proper fruit."

Then spake the royal Libbard thus; "My Lord, }
Permit me humbly to throw in a word; }
I own I think that Reynard should be heard. }
With ease You can Your objects carry out,
When he comes hither, as he will, no doubt.
I think this is the general view; I mean,
We all would take the same view as the Queen."

Then Isgrim spake out; "Forgive me, Prince,
Your words, though wise, do not my mind convince.
Put case that Reynard now were present here,
And from this double charge himself could clear;
Yet would I undertake to show good cause

His worthless life lies forfeit to the laws.
But of such matters better silent be
Until we have him safe in custody.
Have you forgot the wondrous tale he told
About King Emm'rick's hidden store of gold?
At Husterlow, near Krekelburn, he swore
It would be found, and fifty falsehoods more.
Both me and Bruin hath he brought to shame;
And life we hold less dear than our good name.
And yet at freedom roams the Rebel still,
And steals and murders whom and what he will.
If to the King and Council this seem fit,
We, howsoever wronged, must needs submit.
Prince Libbard though suggests he may appear
E'en yet at Court; but why is he not here?
The Royal missive bade all Lieges come;
But he, the skulking Thief! remains at home."

Then said the King of Beasts; "Why more delay?
Why for the Traitor's coming longer stay?
My Royal will is, ye all ready be
On the sixth day from this to follow me.
Unless our pow'r shall quite be set at nought,
These ills, my Lords, must to a close be brought.
Prepare yourselves at once for battle's din;
Come, armed with sword and bow and javelin;
Let each right worthily his weapons wield,
So he may merit knighthood on the field.
My Subjects I expect will aid their Liege;
The fortrefs Malepartus we'll besiege;
And all its myst'ries into daylight bring."
Then cried they all aloud; "Long live the King!"

Thus were the Monarch and the Peers agreed;
And Reynard's certain doom now seemed decreed.
But Greybeard, at the banquet who had been,

In secret left the gay and festive scene.
He hastened off the wary Fox to find,
And let him know what now was in the wind.
And as alone his weary way he sped,
Thus to himself the grieving Badger said;

“ Ah! Uncle dear! how I deplore thy case!
Thou prop and ornament of all our Race!
With thee to aid us and to plead our cause
We never feared the rigor of the laws.”

Thus he arrived at Malepartus' gate,
Where in the open air Sir Reynard fate.
Two youthful Pigeons he his prey had made,
Who their first flight that morning had essay'd;
But ill-supported by their new-fledged wings,
They fell, and he pounced on the poor weak Things.
Soon as he saw the Badger drawing near
He rose and said; “ Ah, welcome, Nephew dear!—
For dear you are to me 'fore all my Kin;—
But what a mortal hurry you seem in!
How hot you are! and how you puff and blow!
You bring some cheerful news for me, I know.”

“ Alas!” said Greybeard, panting, “ anything
But cheerful, Uncle, are the news I bring.
For all, excepting honor, now is lost:
Ne'er have I known King Noble seem so croft;
Deep hath he vowed a shameful death shall be
The doom of Reynard and his Family.
He and his Barons bold, a doughty Band,
Armed at all points,—for such is his command,—
With bow and sword and javelin and spear,
On the sixth day from this will all be here.
Bethink you then in time; for what can you,
'Gainst such an army, single-handed do?
Bruin and Ifegrim are with the King

Quite reconciled ; their will is every thing.
The Wolf of crimes of every fort and kind
Accuses you, and sways the Royal mind.
He has,—as you will but too shortly see,—
Been raised to a Field Marshal's dignity.
The Crow and Rabbit have been both at Court,
And of your doings made a sad report.
Should the King this time get you in his pow'r,
Your life's not worth the purchase of an hour."

"That all? Your story moves me," quoth the Fox,
"As summer breezes do primæval rocks.
As for the King and all his Council too,
I'll warrant me they'll have enough to do;
At least to talk about; because, in fact,
They'll prate and prate for ever, and not act.
About such trifles, Nephew, do not fret;
But just step in and see what we can get.
You see these nice young Pigeons I've just caught;
They are the best of eating, to my thought;
Their bones and flesh like jellied milk and blood:
So light; and I'm compell'd to take light food;
My Wife too is of the same taste as I;
Come in; she'll welcome you right heartily.
She is not well though, so I would not let her
Know why you come; for trifles quite upset her.
We'll start to-morrow; and I'm nought afraid
But you'll afford me kind and kindred aid."

Quoth Greybeard, "I would die for you with pleasure."
Quoth Reynard, "You oblige me past all measure.
And if I live, as well I trust I may,
Be sure that I your kindness will repay."

"Go," said the other, "go before your Peers,
With that brave honest heart, devoid of fears;
At least a hearing you'll obtain from them.

Even Prince Libbard says they can't condemn,
Until they've heard all you may have to say;
And the Queen thinks precisely the same way.
This hint to your advantage you may guide."

"Be sure I will;" the crafty Fox replied;
"Howe'er the King may storm; in his despight,
I have no doubt to make the matter right;
I know the bait at which he'll surely bite." }

So into Reynard's dwelling now they went;
The Housewife welcomed them with kind intent;
The hospitable board was quickly spread,
And on the Pigeons daintily they fed;
Duly divided each one had his share;
Much were they relished and was nought to spare.
They could, for it was but a scanty feast,
Have eaten half a dozen more at least.

The meal concluded, they to chat begin;
And the fond Father has the Children in;
And as they climb and cling about his knees,
They waken his parental sympathies:

"Are they not charming little Rogues?" he said,
"So frolic, yet so thoroughly well-bred.
Russell is such a Scamp; and his young Brother,
Greykin, will one day prove just such another.
Never will they their lineage disgrace;
Their principles do honor to their Race.
One a young straggling Bantam up shall pick,
The other pounce upon a Guinea-chick;
Nor do they rest contented on dry ground,
But plunge for Ducklings in the Parson's pond.
To hunt I'd send them oft'ner, if I durst;
But care and prudence they must study first;
Learn never to be taken unawares,
And to avoid all Hunters, Dogs and snares.

And when by habit they expert shall grow,
 And courage, tempered with due caution, shew,
 In search of prey then daily shall they roam,
 And never shall we want for food at home.
 Slow stealthy step, low crouch and steadfast aim, }
 Sure spring and firm grip; that is Reynard's game; }
 Thus have we still upheld the credit of our name." }

"Ay, Children are in truth great blessings, Sir;"
 Said Greybeard, who was still a Bachelor
 "Pledges of holy and of lawful love,
 A constant joy and solace must they prove;
 Centred in them, the happy Parents see
 The pleasures both of Hope and Memory;
 And if sometimes they prove a source of trouble,
 That makes, no doubt, the latter pleasure double.
 Nor are your joys confined to you alone;
 I love your Children as they were my own."

"Suffice it for to-day;" then Reynard said;
 "We all are sleepy; let us now to bed."

Then on the floor, soft strewn with leaves and hay,
 Their weary limbs adown to rest they lay.
 But Reynard could not sleep for haunting cares,
 So grave appeared the posture of affairs.
 He tossed and tumbled all the livelong night,
 With aching eyes he met the morning light.
 Then to the Partner of his joys and woes
 Thus did he speak, as from his couch he rose;

"Be not alarmed; to Court I go again
 At Greybeard's wish; at home you'll safe remain.
 That no one know where I am gone 'twere best;
 Be of good cheer and leave to Heav'n the rest."

"What!" cried Dame Ermelyne, "Again to Court!
 Methinks your foes would wish no better sport.
 Are you obliged to go? Bethink you well

Of what on your last visit there befell."

"Indeed," quoth Reynard, "it was past a jest,
I ne'er remember to have been so preft.



But nothing certain is beneath the fun ;
No matter how a thing may be begun,
None can say how 'twill finish, till 'tis done. }
Albeit 'tis needful that to Court I go,—
For I have much that's weighty there to do,—

Be calm, I beg you ; there is nought to fear ;
A week at furthest I'll again be here.
Adieu then, for a time, dear Love ;" he cried ;
Then off he starts with Greybeard at his side.





CHAPTER THE EIGHTH.

The Journey.

TOWARDS King Noble's Court without delay,
Greybeard and Reynard now held on their way.
And the Fox said, "My heart feels quite elate,
This journey will, I know, prove fortunate.
And yet, dear Nephew, since I last confest,
My life has truly not been of the best.
Hear what fresh crimes I now have to deplore ;—
Some too which I forgot to tell before.

"A good stout scrip I've had from Bruin's hide :
The Wolf and his good Lady have supplied
My tender feet, each with a pair of shoes ;
'Tis thus I've wreaked my vengeance on my Foes.
The King too, I confess, I've badly treated,
And with gross falsehoods scandalously cheated.
Further,—for nought will I conceal from you,—
I killed the Hare, and what's more, ate him too :

His mangled head by Bellyn I sent back,
 Trusting the King would stretch him on the rack.
 The Rabbit too, I tried to make my prey;
 Although—thank Heav'n for that!—he got away.
 Th' offence of which the Crow doth now complain
 Is not without foundation in the main;
 For why should I the simple truth disguise?
 I did devour his wife before his eyes.

“These my chief sins are since my last confession;
 But I omitted then an old transgression;
 A trick, for which I hope forgiv'n to be,
 Against the Wolf, mine ancient Enemy.

“One day we happened to be travelling
 The road between Kaktyfs and Elverding;
 When we a Mare perceived with her young Foal,
 The Dam and Daughter each as black as coal;
 'Bout four months old the Filly seemed to be;
 Said If'grim, who was nearly starved, to me,
 'See, prithee, Nephew, if you can entice
 'Yon Mare to sell her Foal at any price.'
 Rash was the venture, I was well aware;
 But up I trotted, and addressed the Mare;
 'Say, dearest Madam, may I make so bold
 'To ask if this sweet Creature's to be sold?
 'If so, for it belongs to you, I see,
 'I trust upon the price we may agree.'
 Said she; 'Yes, if I get the sum I want,
 'I'll sell her; and 'tis not exorbitant;
 'You'll find it written on my near hind hoof.'
 I guessed her meaning and kept well aloof.
 'Alas!' I cried, as though I nought suspected;
 'My education has been fore neglected;
 'Reading and writing are beyond my pow'r;
 'My parents have a deal to answer for.

‘Not for myself the dear Child I desire;
‘It was the Wolf who bade me to inquire.’
‘He’d better come himself,’ replied the Mare;
Quoth I, ‘I’ll tell him what your wishes are.’
So where he waited I joined Ifegrim:
‘The Foal is to be had,’ said I to him;
‘The price is written on the Mare’s hind hoof;
‘She kindly offered me to see the proof;
‘But ’twas no use to me, who cannot read;
‘My life, alas! has sadly run to feed.
‘But you, dear Uncle, soon will make it out;
‘Approach and read, for you can read, no doubt.’
Said Ifegrim, ‘I rather think I can;
‘German, French, Latin, and Italian.
‘To school I went at Erfurt, then to college,
‘Where I picked up a vast amount of knowledge;
‘Took duly my degrees and honors too;
‘I swear I quite forget how much I knew:
‘All one learns there is wondrously abstruse,
‘Though not, perhaps, in practice of much use.
‘I’ll go and the inscription read at once,
‘To prove that, though a Scholar, I’m no Dunce.’
So off he started to the Mare, quite bold,
Asked for how much the Foal was to be fold;
She gave the answer she had giv’n before;
And down he stooped the writing to explore.
Her hoof she lifted gently from the grafs;
Fresh shod and armed with six new nails it was;
And fetched him a full plumper on the head,
That down he tumbled, stunned, and lay for dead.
Then off she galloped with her frisky Foal,
And whinnied as she went, for joy of foul.
For a good hour the Wolf lay on the ground,
Then ’gan to howl, like any beaten Hound.

I hastened up to him, and, ‘Uncle, say,’
 Quoth I, ‘what causes you lament this way?’
 ‘Have you your bargain made with Madam Mare?’ }
 ‘And eaten up her Foal? that’s not quite fair!’ }
 ‘Sure, for my pains, I should have had my share.’ }
 ‘And, as you are so learned, prithee do
 ‘Expound to me the writing on the shoe?’



‘Ah me! I am derided!’ he made moan;
 ‘My suff’rings though might melt a heart of stone.
 ‘Never before did I so badly fare.
 ‘Oh! may the Devil fetch that long-legged Mare!
 ‘Six bleeding wounds I have in my poor head.
 ‘The only wonder is I am not dead.’
 “Thus I’ve confessed, as far as I am able,

And made my conscience clean and comfortable.
Now that is done, I trust to hear from you
Some ghostly counsel what is next to do."

Him Greybeard answered thus ; "'Tis true indeed
Of ghostly counsel you stand fore in need ;
For from your tone I gather that, as yet,
Your crimes you rather boast of, than regret.
'Tis true, regret for past misdeeds is vain ;
It cannot bring the Dead to life again.
Your sins I must in charity forgive,
Seeing how short a time you have to live ;
For certainly the worst results I dread :
You never can get over that Hare's head.
It was in sooth a most audacious thing
To aggravate the anger of the King !
More mischief to your cause thereby you've done
Than in your thoughtlessness you reckon on."

"Nay, not a jot," replied th' undaunted Rogue ;
Self-interest will always be in vogue.
Those in the world who live must look to rough it,
And meet with many a kick and many a buffet.
He who would best get on must rant and roister,
Nor think to pass his time as in a cloister.
As for the Hare, I own he tempted me ;
He skipped and sprang about so saucily,
And looked so plump, that howsoever I strove,
My appetite proved stronger than my love.
For the Ram's fate I do not care a pin ;
His was the suffer'ing ; mine may be the sin.
'Tis not my worst misdeed by many a one ;
My penance otherwise were quickly done.
To love our Neighbors we are told, 'tis true ;
But Most do just what they ought not to do.
What's done though can't be helped ; and, as you said,

'Tis worfe than ufelefs to regret the Dead.

Ufelefs indeed, I think, is all regret;

Save fome advantage from it one can get.

“Enough of this! we live in awful times!

No Rank or Station feems exempt from crimes!

Corruption from the Rich fpreads to the Poor;

Good men the gen’ral Ill can but deplore;

And though we dare not fpeak, we think the more. }

“The King himfelf will plunder, that we know,

As much as any of his Subjects do;

And, what he does not take himfelf, devolves,

As lawful prey, upon the Bears and Wolves.

To fpeak the truth dares not a fingle Soul,

The mischief may be ne’er fo great or foul.

The Clergy keep quite filent; and no wonder;

They have a decent portion of the plunder.

If of extortion any one complains,

He only has his trouble for his pains.

If ought that you poffefs the Great allures,

Then may you fafely fay it *has been* yours.

But Few to tales of grievance will attend;

And they are fure to weary in the end.

Noble, the Lion, is our Lord and King;

He acts as he were Lord of every thing;

He calls us oft his Children; and, ’twould feem,

Forfooth, that all we have belongs to him.

For let me fpeak my mind; our gracious King

Loves ever thofe the moft, who moft can bring;

And who will dance as he may choofe to fing. }

The Many fuffer, though but Few complain;

The Bear and Wolf are now in pow’r again;

They fteal and rob and pillage, left and right;

And yet find favor in the Royal fight.

While each who might have influence is dumb,

Living in hopes that his own time may come.
Let a poor Devil, like myself, but take
A paltry chicken, what a howl they make.
They're all upon his back without remorse,
And he's condemned to suffer, as of course.
For those who crimes commit of deeper dye,
No mercy show to petty larceny.

“Such thoughts, I own, have often crossed my mind
When to repentance I have felt inclin'd;
And to myself I've said, in Reason's spite,
That what so many do must sure be right.
Conscience indeed within me sometimes stirs,
And says, with that peculiar voice of hers;
'Reynard, why seek thus to deceive thyself?
'No good came ever of unrighteous pelf.'
Then deep remorse I've felt for doing wrong;
Deep for the moment, but not lasting long.
Because, look round the world which way I would,
I saw the Bad fared better than the Good.
Not, as times go, can every one afford
To cherish Virtue as its own reward.

“The people too, save their mobility,
In all their Betters' secrets love to pry;
Their faults they will observe and con by rote,
And pick holes e'en in Honor's petticoat.

“But the worst feature of this pinchbeck age,
Which, if my scorn it mov'd not, would my rage,
Is, that all sorts of public men we see
Merged in the slough of mediocrity,
There will they plunge and wade and flounce and flounder,
Endeav'ring each to keep the other under;
For if one strive, by merits of his own,
To rise, his Neighbors pelt and pull him down,
As though 'twere quite agreed that little men

From a dead level had the furthest ken ;
 That by example might the World be schooled
 With what a small amount of wisdom it is ruled.

“ In private, too, all paltry vices flourish ;
 Men are morose and selfish, fly and currish :
 Backbiting, malice, lying and false-swearing
 Have become matters of familiar bearing.
 Hypocrites and false Prophets so abound
 That Truth, save in a well, can ne’er be found.

“ If to remonstrate with them you should try,
 Quickly and coolly will they thus reply ;
 ‘ The sins you mention cannot serious be,
 ‘ Or sure the Clergy from them would be free.’
 Thus, following those of a superior station,
 The People sin, like Apes, by imitation.
 Thinking and acting much as Monkeys do,
 They often get the same allowance too.

“ Truly the Priesthood better should behave ;
 With common care, their credit they might save.
 But it quite marvellous appears to me
 The slight in which they hold the Laity.
 Before our very eyes they do not mind
 To act in any way they feel inclin’d ;
 As though we all, like Bats or Moles, were blind. }
 But ev’ry one, his eyes who uses, knows
 What kind of store they set upon their vows.
 Beyond the Alps, ’tis said, that ev’ry Priest
 Holds consort with one Mistress at the least ;
 And what is winked at by the Court of Rome
 No wonder should be practised here at home.
 The holy Fathers, if truth may be spoke,
 Have Children just like any married Folk ;
 And, with paternal love, take care enough
 None of their Offspring shall be badly off ;

These, never thinking what was their Mamma,
 To lawful Children will not yield the *pas*;
 Others they treat with as much slight and scorn,
 As they were honestly, nay, nobly born.
 Clad in the armor of sheer impudence,
 They have of shame or modesty no sense.
 Time was, these base-born Sons o'th' Clergy knew
 What was their proper place, and kept it too.
 But now they go about as brave and bold
 As any Lords. Such is the pow'r of gold.

“ You see the Priest possessed, go where you will, }
 Of toll and tribute from each farm and mill ;
 And thus the World is disciplined to ill. }
 No marvel the poor People go astray,
 When, blind themselves, the Blind lead them the way.

“ Where for that pattern Pastor shall we look
 Content to feed and not to shear his flock ;
 Who the pure precepts of the Gospel teaches,
 And practises the doctrines that he preaches ;
 Who, if he suffer Wrong, will pardon it,
 And turn his right cheek if his left be smit ;
 Who upon worldly treasures sets no store,
 But sells his all and gives it to the Poor ?
 Alas ! much readier a Priest you'll find
 To pride, revenge, and avarice inclin'd.
 Such set the Laity a vile example,
 And on all precepts of their Master trample.

“ As for their Bastards, would they quiet be,
 No one on earth would notice them, you see.
 'Tis but their vanity that we condemn ;
 For most unjust it were to carp at them.
 It is not Race that makes us great or good ;
 Nor shame nor honor come by birth or blood.
 Let Heralds draw what fancied lines they can,

Virtue and Vice alone mark man from man.
 The honest Priest will ever honored be;
 The bad be shunned, whate'er his pedigree;
 How good soe'er the sermons he may preach,
 Folks will contrast his actions with his speech.
 'What does he for the Church?' they'll argue thus,
 'He who is ever preaching up to us—
 "Be sure you keep your Church in good repair,
 "My Brethren, if of Grace you wish to share:"
 'For aught he does himself, while us he fleeces,
 'The sacred edifice might fall to pieces.'

"In costly fare and sumptuous array
 They squander more than half their wealth away.
 Engrossed with worldly thoughts, how can they spare
 Their time for acts of piety and pray'r?
 While the good Pastor—so at least I've heard—
 Devotes his life to th' service of the Lord;
 With modest temperance and sober gaiety,
 Setting a good example to the Laity.

"Full well too do I know the hooded clafs;
 A dirty, frowzy, hypocritic Race;
 A tribe of prowling, prying Creatures, which
 Spend their whole time in hunting up the Rich.
 Adepts in flattery, they reckon most
 How they may use it on a liberal Host.
 If one but get a footing, three or four
 Are sure to follow, if not many more.
 Who in the cloister only longest prates
 Is sure to gain promotion o'er his Mates;
 Reader he's made, Librarian or Prior,
 Or he may even mount to something higher.
 Others, as good as he, are thrust aside;
 The prizes so unfairly they divide.
 Some pass their time in fasting and in pray'r,

While others sleep or sumptuously fare.

“As for your Papal Legates, Prelates, Deans,
Your Abbesses, your Nuns, and your Beguines,
What tales might I tell of them if I would;
Yet little I regret, to say, that’s good.
One cry they always have, and one alone;
’Tis, ‘Give me yours and let me keep my own.’
But few there are, not Ten assuredly,
Who strictly with their Founder’s rules comply.
’Tis thus the Church acquires a doubtful name,
Is brought to weakness, and sometimes to shame.”

“Uncle,” the Badger said, “I cannot guess
Why you should other People’s sins confess.
If they’ve done ill, what Good is that to you?
With your own matters you’ve enough to do.
Why should you meddle with the Priests and Nuns?
Sure Mother Church can manage her own Sons.
Let each his own peculiar burdens bear;
Let each th’ account of his own deeds prepare;
The audit-day will surely come, which none,
Or in, or out a cloister-walls, can shun.

“You talk too much though of all sorts of things;
Scarce can I follow all your wanderings;
I sometimes fear you’ll leave me in the lurch:
Pity you did not go into the Church.
Great as your lore, you’d there find scope for it;
I should, with Others, reap the benefit.
The most of us, I own, are Brutes indeed,
And of good doctrine stand in awful need.”

Now the Court’s precincts they approached at last;
Said Reynard to himself—“The die is cast!”
When on the road Martin the Ape they met,
Who off upon a tour to Rome had set;
And both he kindly greeted. “Uncle dear,”

Thus to the Fox, "be of good heart and cheer."
Then questions put he to him, not a few,
Although the state of matters well he knew.

"My good luck seems for ever to have fled,"
To Martin then the wily Reynard said;
"Some scurvy Comrades, moved by dirty spleen,
Again, I find, accusing me have been.
The Rabbit and the Crow complain, I hear,
That one has lost a Wife, and one an ear.
But what on earth has that to do with me?
That would I make them pretty quickly see,
If to the King I could but get to speak;
My cause I know is strong, as theirs is weak.
But still I labor 'neath the Papal Ban,
A wretched excommunicated man!
There's not a Soul, except the Prebendary,
Can rescue me from out this sad quandary.
Unhappily, though why I cannot tell,
I don't stand, somehow, with the Clergy well.
This and more evils to a vast amount,
I suffer upon Isgrim's account.

"A Monk he once became; but one fine day
He from the monastery ran away:
The rules he found too rigid, and he swore
He lost his time in fasting and in pray'r.
I helped his flight; a cause of deep regret,
Which I have ever felt and do so yet;
For nought since then he's done but slander me,
And work me ev'ry kind of injury.
What if I made a pilgrimage to Rome;
How would my family get on at home?
Isgrim then would cause them endless ill;
He'd have the pow'r, as he now has the will.
And many Others are there who design

All forts of mischief both to me and mine.
If from this awful Ban I were but freed,
My cause at Court were certain to succeed."

Said Martin, "I am glad 'tis in my pow'r
To do you service in this trying hour.
I am just starting on a tour to Rome;
And may do much t' ameliorate your doom.
You are my Kinsman; set your mind at rest;
I will not suffer you to be oppress'd.
I've some weight, as the Bishop's Secretary;
I'll make him cite to Rome the Prebendary;
Against him in your cause will I make fight,
And, Uncle, they shall do you ample right.
The doom of Ban, reversed shall shortly be,
Your absolution I'll bring back with me,
Your Foes their long hostility shall rue,
Losing their labor and their money too.
I know how causes may at Rome be won,
And what is best to do, what leave undone.
My Cousin, Simon, has great influence;
For our name's sake he'll favor your defence:
There's Gripeall too, Greedy and Either-side,
And Turncoat, and I know not who beside.
For I have at the College many a Friend,
Who to our cause their able aid will lend;
Or, rather let me say, their aid will sell;
For only those they help who fee them well.
I've sent my money first, for that alone
Will there ensure that justice shall be done.
Loudly they talk of justice, and such cant,
But 'tis your money that they really want.
How crooked be a cause, or intricate,
The touch of gold will make it plain and straight.
With that to find a welcome you are sure,

Without it, closed against you ev'ry door.

“ Do you then, Uncle, stay at home; while I
 Your knotty cause will manage to untie.
 To Court 'twere best you should at once repair;
 Seek out my Wife, Dame Ruckenaw, when there;
 She's a shrewd Soul, and with the King and Queen
 A special Favorite has ever been.
 Take her advice, whate'er she recommend;
 There's nothing but she'll do t' oblige a Friend.
 On many a staunch Ally you there will light;
 Such often help one more than being right.
 Her Sisters two are sure with her to be,
 And my three Children, for I have but three;
 And many others of our common Kin,
 Who'll stoutly stick by you, through thick and thin.
 Should justice be denied you, fend to me,
 And what my pow'r is you shall quickly see:
 An awful Evil on this land shall fall,
 On King, Men, Women, Children, one and all;
 An Interdict shall on the realm be laid;
 No service shall be sung, no mass be said,
 No Christian grave receive th' unhouseled Dead. }
 The land a heathen desert will I make;
 Be of good cheer then, Coz, and comfort take.

“ The Pope is old, nor sound in mind or limb;
 But Few he cares for, and None care for him.
 'Tis Cardinal Wifeacre rules the Church,
 And crows, as roosted on the highest perch;
 To which no doubt one day he may aspire,
 For he is full of craft and full of fire.
 He is enamoured of a certain Dame,
 Whom well I know, and, if I would, could name.
 Her wishes she has only to make known;
 And what she wishes, is as good as done.

“ But many tricks and frauds are played at Rome,
Which to the Pope’s ears never chance to come.
But no one can get on without some aid ;
Friends one must make, or buy them ready made.
Rely on me, dear Coz ; the King well knows,
I will not see you fall before your Foes ;
’Twere just as well, he should remember too
How Many kindred claim, with me and you :
For sober counsel, not a Family
At Court can with the Apes and Foxes vie.
This cannot fail your dangers to allay,
Let matters even take what turn they may.”

Reynard replies, “ There’s nothing, dearest Coz,
Gives me such comfort as your friendship does :
I shall remember it, an I get free.”
Then each the other greeted courteously ;
And tow’rds the Court, to face his angry Foes,
Reynard, with no escort but Greybeard, goes.





CHAPTER THE NINTH.

The Advocacy.

REYNARD had now reached Court, and still had hope
With his accusers he might safely cope;
Yet when his num'rous foes he saw arrayed,
All eager for revenge, he felt dismayed;
But though his heart might tremble, with firm stride
He passed the Barons, Greybeard by his side.

Unto the Monarch's throne they both drew near,
When Greybeard whispered thus in Reynard's ear;
"Take courage, Uncle, for the King is gracious;
And, we know, fortune favors the Audacious:
The brave love danger on its own account,
And are more pleased the greater its amount."

And Reynard answered, "What you say is true; }
Sage your advice and comfortable too; }
Were you in my place I'd so counsel you." }

With searching eye he glanced th' assembly round,
Where many Kinsmen, but few Friends, he found;
For at his hands the most but ill had fared;
The Otter nor the Beaver had he spared;
None but he'd played some pranks on, great or small;
Yet with assurance now he greets them all.
And down before the throne he lowly knelt,
And boldly spake, howe'er he may have felt;

“ May Heav'n above, from whom no thought or thing
Is hidden, long preserve my Lord the King;
And my good Lady too and gracious Queen,
Whose humblest Vassal I am proud t' have been;
And grant you both sound judgment, clear and strong,
The diff'rence to discern 'tween Right and Wrong.
For falsehood now is rife in ev'ry spot;
Almost all men appear what they are not.
Would each man's thoughts were writ upon his brow,
So that his secret soul the King might know;
Then would it plainly to the world appear
How true and loyal is the heart I bear.
I know the Wicked rage together still,
And howl against me, as they always will.
In ev'ry way to injure me they strive,
And of Your countenance would quite deprive;
As though I were the veriest Wretch alive. }
But love of Justice is a mighty thing;
None own its pow'r more than my Lord and King.
Let men seek to mislead him as they may,
From the straight path of Right he ne'er will stray.”

While thus he spake the Courtiers round him throng,
All wond'ring at the boldness of his tongue.
His crimes so flagrant and notorious were,
That each was anxious his defence to hear.

“ Thou Rascal Reynard!” thus the Monarch said,

“Thy glosing speech thy cause can little aid;
On thy persuasive arts no more depend,
Thy shameless course at length hath reach'd its end.
Thy truth and loyalty we all well know,
As witness here the Rabbit and the Crow.
Full is the measure of thy wickedness,
And craft can nought avail thee, boldness less.”

Reynard, uneasy at this Royal speech,
Feared now the King he might not over-reach,
For he had spoke in terms precise and plain;
Ah! how he wished he were safe home again!
But wishing now could do him little good;
He must get through it the best way he could.

“Noblest and mightiest of Kings;” he said,
“Though you decree my life is forfeited,
I fain may hope that You will hear me first;
You’ve heard but one side, and that side the worst.
When clouds and tempests o’er the state were hovering,
Firm have I stood and faithful to my Sovereign,
When some, that I could name, have fled their post,
Some who are now esteemed and favored most,
Who bravely take each opportunity,
When I am absent, most to slander me.
Hear only my defence and then decide;
My doom, whate’er it be, I must abide.

“Forgotten is my service to the State?
How I have early watched and labored late?
If of all crimes not quite exempt I were,
Of my free will should I now venture here?
I should have shunned Your presence conscience-fared,
Nor my Accusers thus to meet have dared.
Nay, the world’s treasures, heaped up seven-fold,
Should not have drawn me forth from my strong hold.
Upon my native heather I was free,

And none might touch me with impunity;
But my good Greybeard with the message came
That I was wanted here, and here I am!
I had been counsel holding with the Ape,
How from the Papal Ban I might escape;
And he had promised to remove the whole
Of that oppressive burden from my soul.
'I will myself,' said he, 'to Rome resort;
'Do you, without delay, repair to Court;
'I'll undertake your character I'll clear.'
Such his advice; he'd own it were he here.
Our Bishop knows the truth of much I state;
Five years has Martin been his Surrogate.

"And here I find complaint upon complaint;
Enough to wear the patience of a Saint.
The ogling Rabbit has, I hear, a case;
Let him stand forth and meet me, face to face!
'Tis a light task the Absent to accuse;
But none to hear my answer can refuse.
Scurvy Companions, are they, by my troth!
My Guests they've been, the Crow and Rabbit, both.

"'Twas but the morning before yesterday,
The latter tow'rds my dwelling came his way;
He greeted me in passing, soft and fair;
I'd just begun the form of Morning Pray'r.
He let me know that he for Court was bound;
I said, 'Heav'n grant you get there safe and sound.'
He spoke of empty stomach, weary feet;
I asked, 'Will you take anything to eat?'
'I fear I might intrude;' was his reply.
'Oh! not the slightest in the world,' said I.
I fetched some wheaten bread and cherries fresh;
(On Wedn'days 'tis my rule to eat no flesh;)
And Master Bunny seemed contented quite,

And ate his bread and fruit with appetite.
 My youngest Son, a forward little Chap,
 Suddenly jumped into the Rabbit's lap,
 To see if he might chance pick up a scrap. }
 'Twas rude, I own, but the Boy meant no ill;
 Children you know, Sire, will be Children still.
 But, making no allowance for his youth,
 The brutal Rabbit struck him in the mouth.
 Poor little Russell! 't was too bad indeed;
 For the blow made his lips and nostrils bleed.
 And then my eldest, Greykin, quick as thought,
 Leapt up and seized th' Aggressor by the throat;
 His game he played and 'venged his Brother well!
 'T is thus exactly how the thing befell.
 I ran directly that I heard the noise,
 Rescued the Rabbit, and chastised the Boys.
 I do not sympathize with him a jot,
 For richly he deserved whate'er he got.
 Had I meant ill, I had not interposed;
 The Young Ones his account would soon have closed.
 And this is now my thanks! He says, I hear,
 'T was I myself that tore his stupid ear.
 A blund'ring tale! I think my powers I know
 Rather too well to botch a bus'ness so.

"As for the Crow, he came quite out of breath,
 And said his Wife had ate herself to death.
 Some great Fish she had gorged, gills, bones and all,
 Had choked her, as her swallow was but small.
 The truth he best knows; but the Slanderer
 Now dares assert that I have murdered her;
 May-be he did, himself; there's none can tell;
 For my own part, it were impossible;
 These dingy Devils, when they choose to fly,
 No spring of mine could reach, however high.

“ Those who bring forward charges such as these
Should prove them by trustworthy Witnesses.
This ev’ry Freeman may of right demand ;
And on my Right I boldly take my stand.
Are there no proofs ; another course is clear ;
Lo ! ready to do battell am I here !
Let both the day and place be now assign’d ;
And if a worthy Advers’ry I find,
In birth my equal, I’ll the combat dare ;
And he the honor who then wins may wear.
Such ever was the rule of law of yore ;
So be it now, for I desire no more.”

All stood and heard and wondered, Beasts and Birds,
At the audacity of Reynard’s words.
The Crow and Rabbit both felt dire dismay,
And secretly from Court they stole away ;
Nor did they dare another word to say. }

They muttered to each other ; “ ’T were indeed
Unwise against him further to proceed.
Do what we may, no better should we be ;
For after all, what Witnesses have we ?
The truth unto ourselves is only known,
For with the Felon we were each alone.
So in the end the loss on us would fall.
Oh ! would the Devil seize him, once for all !
And he proposes battell now ! To us !
Truly the thought is too preposterous !
So powerful and cunning as he is ;
So full of vigor and of trickeries !
’T would take to face him five as good as we,
And even then he’d beat them easily.”

Both Isgrim and Bruin groaned with ire,
When from the Court they saw the Twain retire.

“ Are any present here,” then said the King,

Who against Reynard have a charge to bring?
If any such there be, let them advance;
For he stands here on his deliverance.
There were enough to threaten yesterday;
And now their time is come; but where are they?"

Said Reynard, "Ah! 'tis ever the old game;
Those who against the Absent most declaim,
Boasting what they could do, would he but come,
When he arrives, stay prudently at home.
These Sland'ers vile, the Rabbit and the Crow,
Fain would have brought poor me to shame and woe.
But I forgive, since they are penitent;
Most thoroughly ashamed away they went.
How dangerous it is, you all have seen,
T' encourage those who slander absent men.
They scruple not the truth aside to wrest,
And victimise the Wisest and the Best.
To Others only do these words apply,
Of little moment to the State am I."

"Hear me!" exclaimed the King, "thou Traitor vild!
Say, where is Pufs, the Gentle and the Mild?
My brave and trusty Courier was he,
And treacherously slain hath been by thee.
Had I not pardoned thee thy numerous crimes?
Equipped thee forth to visit holy climes,
With scrip and staff and other pilgrim gear,
Believing thy repentance was sincere?
And thy first act was my poor Pufs to kill!
Bellyn thou mad'st thy Messenger of ill:
He in thy wallet brought the mangled head;
And here in open Court unblushing said,
He brought despatches which you both had framed,
Though he the larger share of merit claimed:
But in the wallet was the head alone!

To make a mock and gibe at Me 'twas done!
One though hath suffered for the base design;
Bellyn hath lost his life; look thou to thine!"

"Great Heav'ns! What do I hear?" fly Reynard said,
"Pufs murdered! Gracious Pow'rs! and Bellyn dead!
Oh, fatal hour! oh, cursed love of self!
Alas! alas! that I were dead myself!
With them the choicest treasures have I lost!
Jewels, such as the wide world cannot boast!
The rarest things by them I sent for You;
For I believed them loyal both, and true.
Of Bellyn who would credit such a thing,
His Friend to murder and to rob his King?
Who on this earth could e'er expect to find
Such craft with such simplicity combin'd?"

To hear him out the Monarch would not stay,
He rose and tow'rd his palace took his way;
Nor caught distinctly all that Reynard spake:
Determined was he deep revenge to take.
To his own closet did he straight withdraw,
And found the Queen there with Dame Ruckenaw;
A special Fav'rite had she ever been,
The fly She-ape, both with the King and Queen;
She haply now might do the Fox some good;
For she was wife and wary, sage and shrewd.
Certain was she, wherever she appeared,
To be by all respected and revered.
Marking the angry flush on the King's cheek,
With thoughtful words thus gravely did she speak:

"Whenever, gracious Sire, at my request,
You have allowed me counsel to suggest,
Ne'er yet have You had reason to repent;
Nor have you deemed me too impertinent,
If, when my Liege was in an angered mood,

Reynard the Fox.



A word of warning I have dared t' intrude.
Once more vouchsafe, Sire, to extend Your grace ;
This matter toucheth one of mine own race ;
Who would desert a Friend in such a case ?
Reynard's my kinsman, be he what he may ;
But what I think of him I'll frankly say ;
Now he is here and stands upon his Right,
His cause I view in a more hopeful light.

Had not his Father, whose fame still endures,
And who was graced and countenanced by Yours,
With evil tongues for ever to contend,
And from false charges his good name defend? }
But still his Foes he baffled in the end.
When thoroughly was sifted the affair,
'Twas found what close inspection it would bear.
Although his Sland'ers charged him many a time
With incapacity, as well as crime;
Yet he retained his station to the last,
And, as the Bear and Wolf are now, was grac'd.
'Twould be as well if they themselves could clear
From all that 'gainst their characters we hear.
But of the rules of Right they nothing know;
Both what they say proves this, as what they do."

Then the King answered; "Can you wonder, Dame,
That Reynard's conduct should my wrath inflame?
My trusty Hare did he not basely flay?
And lead that Simpleton, the Ram, astray?
And now presumes in open Court, forsooth,
To boast about his loyalty and truth;
When by the gen'ral voice accused he stands,
Of crimes unnumbered as the ocean sands!
'Tis proved beyond the shadow of a doubt,
He breaks My peace and sets My laws at nought.
With robberies and murders, day and night,
My land and Lieges doth he vex and fright!
I'll bear no more!" Then answered the She-Ape;
"Not ev'ry one his course can wisely shape.
'Tis hard to please all men, and giv'n to few
Both to deserve success and get it too:
And he who prospers, in his path shall find
Honor before, Envy and Hate behind;
His Foes in secret will his ruin scheme,

When open fight too dangerous they deem.

“And many a time has this to Reynard happed.
It cannot have Your memory escaped,
How often to your rescue he hath come,
With counsel sage, when all the rest were dumb.
What fine discernment through his judgment ran
In that late leading case of ‘*Snake and Man*.’
None could decide the issue that was raised,
But he alone: how was his wisdom praised!”

Noble the King reflected a brief space,
Then answered; “Yes, I recollect the case;
But all the details I have quite forgot.
’Twas most confused and tangled; was it not?
I pray you, if you can, the facts relate.”
“Briefly,” said she, “the whole affair I’ll state.

“Two years ago, a Snake of Dragon race
Loudly accused a Peasant to Your Grace.
The Man refused her justice, she complained,
Though twice against him she had judgment gained.
The Man appearing to defend the wrong,
She entered on her case with eager tongue.

“Through a small opening in a hedge one day
The Snake, it seem’d, had tried to force her way;
A spring there was before the opening plac’d,
Which, as she entered, caught and held her fast.
She must perforce have perished where she lay,
But that a Trav’ler chanced to pass that way;
To whom she loudly cried; ‘Oh! pity me!
‘Let me implore thee, Sir! and set me free!’
And the Man said; ‘Well, I will let thee loose;
‘Tis hard to see thee strangling in that noose.
‘Yet ere I do it, thou must frankly swear
‘From ev’ry mischief tow’rds me to forbear.’
A solemn oath the anxious Dragon vowed,

Ne'er to harm him to whom her life she owed.
Then from the snare the Man the Snake released;
All gratitude she was, or seemed at least.

“ They travelled on together, but ere long
The Dragon felt the pains of hunger strong,
And in a moment on the Man she flew,
Thinking to strangle and devour him too.
With fearful energy he sprang aside,
And ‘ Oh! is this your gratitude?’ he cried,
‘ Is this the way you keep that awful oath?’
Said she, ‘ To break it I am truly loath,
‘ But I am positively faint with hunger;
‘ I feel a gnawing I can bear no longer.
‘ I know how shocking is ingratitude;
‘ But cannot perish here for want of food.’
‘ Spare me a little yet;’ the Man replied;
‘ Some People we may meet who shall decide,
‘ Impartial Judges betwixt thee and me.’
‘ Well!’ tartly said the Snake; ‘ so let it be!’

“ They journey'd on, till, coming to a pond,
Strongnib, the Raven, with his Son they found;
His name was Little Beaky. These the Snake
Begged the arbitrement to undertake.
The Raven heard the case with thoughtful care,
And, hoping to himself might fall a share,
Straight gave his judgment that the Man be eaten.
‘ Now,’ cried the Snake triumphant, ‘ I have beaten;
‘ My honest purpose shall no more be crost.’
‘ Nay,’ said the Man, ‘ I have not fairly lost.
‘ How shall a Thief on life and death decide?
‘ Or such a case by one sole Judge be tried?
‘ I stand upon my Right and shall appeal;
‘ A Court of four or ten I fain might feel.’
‘ Come on then,’ said the Snake; and off they set;

Ere long with both the Wolf and Bear they met.
 The poor Man now was seized with mortal terror;
 Sure five such Judges never sat in error;
 A Bear, a Wolf, two Ravens, and a Snake;
 Well might th' Appellant for his safety quake.
 The hungry Court were soon unanimous;
 And the grim Wolf delivered judgment thus;—
 'The Snake beyond all doubt the Man might kill,
 'Yet keep her conscience quite unburdened still;
 'Twas plain no law necessity could know,
 'And hunger would release from any vow.'

"Anxious enough the Man was, for the five
 Had plain made up their minds he should not live.
 Then darting forth her forked and pois'nous tongue
 Again the Snake upon the Trav'ler sprung.
 He leapt aside with prompt dexterity,
 Crying, 'Who gave thee power over me?'
 'Twice thou thyself hast heard it;' she replied;
 'Twice has the judgment been upon my side.'
 Then said the Man, 'Judges yourselves ye call!
 'Robbers and Murd'ers are ye, one and all!
 'You and your judgment I repudiate;
 'King Noble only shall decide my fate;
 'To him do I appeal; to his decree
 'Will I submit, though adverse it should be.'

"Then said the Wolf and Bear with jeering grin,
 'You'd better try; the Snake is sure to win.'
 They thought no doubt that the assembled Peers
 Would counsel You, Sire, just like Wolves and Bears.
 Five pressed against poor One, his life to take;
 The Wolf, the Bear, the Ravens, and the Snake.
 The Wolf indeed put in a triple claim;
 His Sons, Thinpaunch and Greedyguts by name,
 Each hoped to have a share of the poor Man;

A terrible disturbance these began;
Howling and clamoring in such a fort,
That both were promptly ordered out of Court.

“ Humbly imploring justice of your Grace,
Then did the Man begin to state his case;—
The Snake now wish'd to kill him, heedless both
Of all his kindness, and her solemn oath.
The facts the Snake knew could not be denied, hence
She pleaded, in confession and avoidance,
Th' almighty power of hunger was the cause,
Which owns no master and obeys no laws.

“ Sore puzzled were You, Sire, how to decide;
Solution it appeared the case defied;
Hard to condemn the honest Man it seemed;
And hard to bear sharp hunger's tooth, You deemed.
Your Council then You summoned to Your aid,
Who only more involved the question made;
Most part gave judgment that the man should die,
But gave their reasons too, unluckily;
And these so bad and inconsistent were,
The more they gave the more they 'broiled th' affair.
For Reynard, as a last resource, You sent;
He came and heard afresh the argument;
You the decision left to him alone,
And said as he adjudged it should be done.

“ Then Reynard said, ‘ Ere I decide the case,
‘ 'Tis needful I should go and view the place;
‘ And see the very way the Snake was bound,
‘ When by the Traveller she first was found.’
So to the spot they sallied, and when there,
The Snake again was fastened in the snare;
Thus matters stood exactly as they were. }

“ Then Reynard gave his judgment: ‘ Things are now
‘ Just as before the cause arose below;

' And neither party can of triumph boast,
 ' For neither now has won, and neither lost ;
 ' And as the circumstances now appear,
 ' The justice of the case to me seems clear :
 ' If the Man please to do so, from the noose
 ' The Snake, upon her oath, he may let loose ;
 ' If not, then he can let her hang there still,
 ' And go about his business if he will.
 ' Such are my views : if better here there be,
 ' Impart them ; or, if not, use these with me.'

" Reynard's decision of this weighty cause
 Met at that time with general applause,
 From you, my Liege, and all who knew the laws. }
 The Man vowed better it could not have been ;
 It even gained th' approval of the Queen.

" 'Twas on all hands agreed that fitter far
 Bruin and Ifgrim were to serve in war ;
 For they were known and feared in ev'ry spot,
 And gladly went where plunder might be got.
 Strong are they, big and bold ; that none denies,
 Yet are their words more bold and big than wife ;
 And too much of their strength alone they brag,
 While in the field behind they often lag.
 At home the Bravest of the Brave are they ;
 At home too always they prefer to stay :
 In sooth the Bears and Wolves eat up the land ;
 'Gainst their united force there's nought can stand.
 What matters it to them whose house may burn ?
 To warm them by the flames will serve their turn.
 What matters it to them who pine or starve ?
 While their own meals they take good care to carve.
 They gulp the yolk, and leave the shell, and swear
 That the partition is most just and fair.
 Reynard the Fox though, on the other hand,

The rules of justice well doth understand ;
And if some evil he perchance have done,
Remember, Sire, he is not made of stone.
A wiser Counsellor You ne'er shall meet ;
Hence am I bold his pardon to entreat."

And the King said ; "I must awhile reflect.
The judgment I distinctly recollect ;
Justice was done unto the Snake, 'tis plain :
Yet still a Rogue is Reynard in the main.
Who trusts in him is deceived beyond all doubt ;
No bonds so tight but he will riggle out.
The Wolf, the Bear, the Cat before ; and now
Hath he assailed the Rabbit and the Crow ;
One of an eye, another of an ear,
A third of life itself he spoils, you hear ;
And yet, though why I cannot comprehend,
You seek the odious monster to defend."

"Ah ! Sire, I cannot from myself conceal
The service he hath done the Commonweal ;"
Thus the Ape answered ; "nor will you deny
How num'rous are his Friends and Family."

Then rose the King of Beasts and issued straight
To where th' assembled Court his coming wait.
Round that vast circle as he cast his eyes,
A host of Reynard's Relatives he spies ;
To vindicate their Kinsman's cause they came,
And in such numbers they were hard to name ;
They ranged together close : on th' other side
The num'rous Foes of Reynard he descried ;
The Court they seemed between them to divide. }

And thus began the Monarch ; "Reynard, hear ;
Thyself from this one crime how canst thou clear ?
By thee, with Bellyn's help, the Hare is dead ;
And as a despatch thou send'st Me back his head.

'Twas done to mock My pow'r, that well I know;
But Bellyn has atoned, and so must thou."

"Woe's me! would I were dead!" the Fox replied;
"But as You find the truth, Sire, so decide.
If I am guilty, let me die, and shame
Fall as a heritage upon my name.
Bellyn, the Traitor vile, hath filch'd from me
The rarest Treasure eye did ever see.
To him and Pufs 'twas giv'n; and sure I am,
That Pufs was robbed and murdered by the Ram.
Oh! could it be but found; though much I fear
It never more to daylight will appear."

"Nay," said the fly She-ape, "why thus despond?
If 'tis on earth it surely may be found.
Early and late we'll seek and never tire;
Of Priests, as well as Laymen, we'll inquire.
But, that our labor may not be in vain,
What were the Jewels like 'twere best explain."

"Ah, well-a-day!" said Reynard; "but they were
Such wondrous costly things, so rich and rare!
To get them back I have but little hope;
None but an Idiot e'er would give them up.
How will it vex poor Ermelyne, my wife;
I fear she'll not forgive me all her life.
For, doubting Bellyn, if not Puffy too,
She begged me not to let the Treasures go.

"I would commence the search this very day;
But these false charges force me here to stay;
I'm bound in honor to defend my Right,
By the bold ordeal of judicial fight.
If I succeed,—as sure succeed I must,
Since I am innocent and Heav'n is just,—
Unfought I will not leave one spot of ground,
But these lost Jewels shall again be found."



CHAPTER THE TENTH.

The Second Pardon.

“**MY** Liege !” thus ran the Fox’s crafty speech ;

“ Before my Friends a hearing I beseech ;
What Treasures let them learn for You were sent ;
For though ’t was foiled, yet good was mine intent ;
On me the blame falls not, but on the Thief.”

“ Say on ;” the Monarch answered, “ but be brief.”

“ Honor and Faith, alas ! from earth have fled !”

With well-dissembled grief then Reynard said :

“ The first of these choice Jewels was a Ring ;

Designed a special present for my King.

Of finest, purest gold this Ring was cast ;

Yet was the substance by the work surpass’d ;

E’en the Crown Jewels ’t would not have disgrac’d. }

On th’ inner side, that next the finger worn,

Engraven letters did the hoop adorn ;

Three Hebrew words of meaning strange they were ;

Few in this land could read the character.

To Master Abryon of Triers alone,
The meaning of those mystic words was known :
He is a wise and very learned Jew,
Skilled in all tongues 'twixt Luen'burg and Poitou ;
With stones and herbs is he acquainted well ;
Knows of what use each one is capable.
He said, when unto him I showed the Ring ;
' Concealed here lies full many a curious thing ;
' These three engraven names, from Paradise
' Were brought of yore by Seth, the Good and Wife ;
' When he, of coming Ills to Man fore-taught,
' In Eden's bow'rs the Oil of Mercy fought.
' Who on his finger wears this Ring shall be
' From ev'ry risk and peril always free ;
' Lightning nor thunder-bolt nor magic charm
' Shall potent be to work him woe or harm.'
And furthermore the cunning Master said,
Whose finger bore that Ring, so he had read,
Should never freeze in winter's direst cold,
And calmly live in years and honors old.

" On th' outer side was set a precious Stone,
A brilliant Carbuncle by night that shone,
And, with its clear and phosphorescent ray,
All things discovered, plain as it were day.
Great pow'rs too had this Stone the Sick to heal ;
Who so but touched it free from crime should feel ;
Nor grief nor trouble could his mind disturb ;
The pow'r of Death alone it could not curb.
And the sage Master unto me made known
The further virtues of this wond'rous Stone ;
As thus ; the proud Possessor of the Gem
Both fire and water may alike contemn ;
Safe from the power of each Enemy,
Betrayed or captured can he never be.

If fasting, on the Stone he gaze, fourscore
Of Foes shall he o'ercome in fight, and more.
The virtues of that Jewel can reduce
The strength of poison and each deadly juice.
Hate it at once will quell; nay, e'en will often
The hearts of those you have befriended soften.

“ But who could count this Jewel's virtues o'er?
I found it haply 'mong my Father's store;
And kept it ever sacred for my King:
Myself I knew unworthy such a Ring.
Of right it appertained to him alone,
Whose virtues shed a lustre on his Throne;
On whom depend our hopes and welfare still,
Whose life I've ever guarded, ever will.

“ I trusted also, luckless that I am!
A Comb and Mirror to that treach'rous Ram.
I hoped that they accepted might have been,
As a memorial, by my gracious Queen.
They were, in sooth, most precious works of art,
And form'd too of my Father's hoard a part.
Coveted were they greatly by my Wife,
And caused, alas! between us, frequent strife;
She fairly longed for them, she used to say;
But yet I ne'er a single inch gave way.

“ Both Comb and Mirror I, with best intent,
Unto my gracious Lady freely sent
A Benefactress kind in Her I see;
From Evil hath she ever shielded me;
When scandalous charges 'gainst me were preferr'd,
She oft hath interposed a friendly word.
Royal She is by qualities and birth;
And both by words and works She proves her worth.
None so deserved those Treasures as my Queen;
And yet their beauty hath She never seen;

And—ah! that I should say so—never will!
To find them now, I fear, is past all skill.

“First of the Comb to speak. To fashion that,
The Artist took bones of the Civet-cat;
That wondrous Beast that lives on flow’rs and spice,
And dwells ’twixt India’s shores and Paradise.
Dyed is his skin with tints of various hues;
And sweetest odors round doth he diffuse;
Hence do all other Beasts his footsteps trace,
And follow him about from place to place;
For they all feel and know, his very smell
Is certain to preserve them sound and well.
’Twas of such bone this precious Comb was made;
His rarest skill the Artist had displayed;
It equalled polished silver in its brightness,
And e’en surpassed it in its lustrous whiteness;
Its scent excelled cloves, pinks and cinnamon;
For the Beast’s odor lives in ev’ry bone;
Corruption may his fleshly frame assail,
But o’er his skeleton can nought prevail;
This never knows decay or gives offence,
But keeps away all plague and pestilence.

“Upon the Comb’s broad back one might behold
A large blue Stone engrained with threads of gold;
Where stood in figures, carved in high relief,
The tale of Paris, the young Trojan Chief;
Who one day, sitting by a river’s strand,
Three Godlike Women saw before him stand;
Juno, Minerva, Venus, were they named;
Each for herself had long an Apple claimed;—
Though once ’twas common to them all indeed;—
To end this strife, at length they thus agreed;
Paris the golden Apple should decree
To her he judged the Fairest of the Three,
And hers alone it evermore should be.

All Three the Youth with curious eye surveyed;
‘ Let me be fairest held,’ thus Juno said;
‘ Let but the Apple be decreed as mine;
‘ And riches infinite henceforth are thine.’
Minerva then; ‘ The prize on me bestow,
‘ And mighty shalt thou be on earth below;
‘ Dreadful thy name alike to Friend and Foe.’ }
Last, Venus; ‘ Why to Wealth or Might aspire?
‘ Is not King Priamus of Troy thy Sire?
‘ Are not thy Brethren, Hector and the rest,
‘ Supreme in wealth and pow’r by All confest?
‘ And while their arms still shelter Troy, your sway
‘ Does not this land, and foreign realms obey?
‘ If Beauty’s Prize thou unto me award,
‘ Thine the best treasure Earth can e’er afford:
‘ That treasure is a Woman past compare,
‘ Noble and prudent, virtuous and fair:
‘ Give me the Apple; Greece’s peerless Queen
‘ Thou shalt possess; Helen the famed, I mean.’
To her the Apple then awarded he,
Adjudging her the Fairest of the Three.
He by her friendly aid that Lady gay,
The Spouse of Menelaus, stole away;
And long did her sweet fellowship enjoy,
Secure within the sacred walls of Troy.

“ Carved was this story on a middle field;
Round which, with graven words, stood many a shield;
That who so took the Comb up in his hand,
The fable there might read and understand.

“ Next of the Mirror hear. In lieu of glafs,
A clear and beauteous Berylstone there was;
All things were shewn therein, though miles away;
And that, by night as plainly as by day.
Who so upon his face or speck or spot,

Or in his eye perchance a cock had got,
 Let him but gaze upon that Mirror clear,
 And ev'ry blemish straight should disappear.
 Who would not, having such a treasure, boast?
 Who would not grieve for such a treasure lost?

“ Out of a costly wood was made the frame,
 Close-grained and shining; Shittim is its name;
 No worm can pierce it; and men justly hold,
 'Tis more than equal to its weight in gold.
 The nearest that comes to it in degree,
 For its rare qualities, is Ebony.
 'Twas of this wood, so shining and close-grained,
 In days of yore, when King Crompares reign'd,
 A cunning Artist framed a wondrous Steed,
 Of mighty powers and unrivalled speed;
 His Rider in a short hour's space he bore,
 With greatest ease, one hundred miles, or more.
 I know not all the facts; but any how
 A Steed like that you cannot meet with now.

“ The Mirror's border, for a good foot wide,
 With exquisite carved work was beautified;
 And 'neath each subject an inscription stood,
 In golden letters, which its meaning shew'd.

“ Briefly of each of these will I discourse:
 First came the story of the envious Horse;
 Who, racing for a wager with a Stag,
 Was greatly vexed so far behind to lag.
 A Shepherd, on the plain, he thus address'd;
 ‘ I'll make thee wealthy, do but my behest.
 ‘ A Stag has hid himself in yonder brake;
 ‘ I'll carry thee; mount boldly on my back;
 ‘ Him thou shalt slay, and flesh and horns and fell
 ‘ In the next market town canst dearly sell.
 ‘ Mount on my back at once; we'll give him chase.’

‘I’ll venture,’ said the Swain, ‘in any case;
‘No harm can come of the experiment.’
So up he mounted, and away they went.
The Stag they saw a little way ahead;
They followed fast, and fast away he fled,
Till the earth trembled under their thundering tread. }
Long the Chase lasted; but the nimble Hart
Of his Pursuers had, and kept the start;
Until at length, relaxing in his speed,
Thus spake, panting, the over-wearied Steed;
‘Prithee dismount, for I am quite distressed;
‘Heavy thou art, and I have need of rest.’
‘No, by my soul!’ the Shepherd Man replied;
‘It was thyself invited me to ride;
‘I’ve got thee and I’ll keep thee in my power.’
And Man’s Slave has the Horse been since that hour.
Thus Evils, which for Others had been sped,
Will oft rebound on the Projector’s head.

“Now further hear, while I with truth allege
What next was carved around the Mirror’s edge:
How once upon a time it came to pass,
A rich Man owned a Spaniel and an Ass;
The Dog was never known to bark or bite,
And was deservedly a Favorite;
At table by his Master’s side he sat,
Fish, flesh and fowl together with him ate;
Or rested in his lap, and there was fed
With dainty morsels of best wheaten bread.
The Spaniel then, who was a Hound of grace,
Would wag his tail, and lick his Master’s face.
Now Neddy, when he saw the Dog’s good luck
With envy and astonishment was struck;
‘With my Lord’s tastes,’ said he, ‘how can it suit
‘To be so partial to that lazy Brute?’

‘ Up in his lap it jumps, and licks his beard,
 ‘ As though by such strange antics ’twere endear’d;
 ‘ While I must toil and travail, in and out,
 ‘ Fetch faggots home, and carry sacks about.
 ‘ I wish my Lord would think the matter o’er,
 ‘ And take a dozen Dogs, or e’en a score;
 ‘ I’d wager, in a year they’d not get through
 ‘ One half the work that in a month I do.
 ‘ While with the best his Dogship fills his maw;
 ‘ Half starved am I, or only stuffed with straw.
 ‘ On the hard earth my couch has ever been;
 ‘ And jeered and mocked am I, wherever seen.
 ‘ I can and will this life no longer bear;
 ‘ In my Lord’s favors I will have my share.’
 Just as he spoke, his Master chanced to pass;
 His game at once begins that stupid Ass;
 Cocks up his bended tail, lays back his ears,
 And o’er his frightened Lord curvetting rears;
 Brays long and loudly, while his beard he licks,
 And strives to imitate the Spaniel’s tricks,
 Caressing him with hard and lusty kicks. }
 His terror-stricken Master sprang aside;
 ‘ Oh! take this horrid Ass away!’ he cried;
 ‘ Kill him at once!’ His Servants run in haste;
 With showers of blows poor Neddy’s sides they baste;
 Then in his stable lock him up again:
 And thus the Ass he was he doth remain.

“ How many are there of this self-fame brood,
 Who, envying Others, do themselves no good.
 Set these in place or pow’r, and just as soon
 Might you feed Porkers with a silver spoon.
 Let the Ass still his burdens duly bear;
 Of straw and thistles make his bed and fare:
 Treat him in any other way you will,

The Second Pardon.



The Brute retains his former habits still ;
And, taking human nature for his guide,
Seeks his own ends, and cares for nought beside.

“ Further will I this narrative pursue ;
If these long tales, Sire, do not weary You.
Around the Mirror's border next was placed,
Carved in relief, with proper legends graced,

The story how Sir Tybalt, heretofore,
 Eternal friendship with my Father swore :
 Each vowed to Each to prove a firm Ally,
 And common danger jointly to defy.
 Trav'ling along one day they chanced to hear
 A cry of Hounds and Huntsmen in their rear.
 ' Hark to those sounds,' cried Tybalt; ' good advice
 ' Were worth, at such a moment, any price.'
 The old one said, ' Your terrors, prithee, lull;
 ' Of wiles and shifts I have a budget full.
 ' Let's stick together, nor forget our oath;
 ' And they shall Neither of us have, or Both.'
 (He said this merely Tybalt to console;
 He had no shifts or wiles, good simple Soul!)
 ' Bother the oath!' replied the treach'rous Cat;
 ' Methinks I know a trick worth two of that.'
 Into a tree, as fast as he could tear,
 He climbed, and left his Uncle planted there.
 The poor Soul stood awhile in anxious doubt;
 While near and nearer came that Hunter rout.
 Then said the Cat; ' Uncle, as you don't climb,
 ' You'd better ope your budget; now's the time!'
 Just then the Beagles caught my Sire in view;
 The Huntsmen shouted, and their horns they blew;
 Off ran my Father; after him the Hounds;
 Amid a perfect Babel of mad sounds;
 Barking and bellowing and bugle-blowing,
 Enough to set the very Devil going.
 My Father swate again for very fright,
 His fewmets cast, and made himself more light;
 And so at length he 'scaped his Foes by flight.
 Thus by his best of Friends was he betray'd,
 By him to whom he trusted most for aid.
 His life was perilled, for those Dogs were swift;

The hole he fled to was his only shift;
And had he not remembered that in time,
His Foes would soon have made short work of him.

“Would of such scurvy Scum the world were rid,
Who treat their Friends as subtle Tybalt did.
How can I love or honor such a Knave,
Who’s sinned the more, the more I pardoned have?
All this was figured round the Mirror’s frame,
With legends fit to mark the moral aim.

“Upon the next compartment might be view’d
A specimen of lupine gratitude.
The Wolf had found a Horse’s skeleton,
For little was there left of it but bone;
He gnawed voracious, and, by evil luck,
A pointed fragment in his gullet stuck;
His sufferings were terrible to see,
He was as nearly choked as Wolf could be.
He sent forth Messenger on Messenger
To call the Doctors in, from far and near;
But though he promised they should well be paid,
Not one could render him the slightest aid.
At length appeared the learned Doctor Crane,
With crimson bonnet and gold-pommelled cane.
‘Oh! help me, Doctor!’ cries the Invalid;
‘Oh! help me, I beseech you, and with speed;
‘But from my throat take out this cursed bone,
‘And any fee you name shall be your own.’
The Crane of his professions felt no doubt;
He stuck his long bill down the Wolf’s huge throat,
And in a jiffy pulled the sharp bone out. }
‘Zounds!’ howled the Wolf; ‘you give me monstrous pain!
‘Take care you never hurt me so again!
‘I pardon you; had it Another been,
‘I might not have so patient proved, I ween.’

‘The bone’s extracted;’ said the cautious Crane;
‘You’re cured; so never mind a little pain.
‘As other Patients are expecting me,
‘I’ll go, if you’ll oblige me with my fee.’
‘Hark to the Simpleton!’ the rude Wolf said;
‘He’s hurt me, and yet wishes to be paid.



‘’T would seem the stupid Idiot cannot know
‘How much to my forbearance he doth owe.
‘His bill and head, which both were in my maw,
‘Unharm’d have I allowed him to withdraw:
‘Methinks that I should ask for the reward!’
‘T is thus the Strong all justice disregard.

“ These tales, and others of a kindred taste,
In high relief artiftically chaf’d,
With legends graved in characters of gold,
Around the Mirror’s frame one might behold.
Too good for me fo rare a work had been,
For I am all too humble, all too mean;
Therefore I fent it for my gracious Queen. }
To her and You, my Liege, I hoped ’t would prove
A token of my loyalty and love.
Much did my Children, little Dears, lament,
When from their home away the Glaß was fent.
Before it, they were wont, the livelong day,
To fkip about and dance and frisk and play,
And laugh, in childifh innocence of mind,
To fee their long thick brushhes trail behind.
Ah! little did I then anticipate
The Ram’s foul treason or the Hare’s fad fate!
I thought they both were beafts of honeft worth,
And the two deareft Friends I had on earth.
Accurfed the Murd’rer’s mem’ry I denounce!
All hope though will I not as yet renounce;
Where’er the Treafures are, I make no doubt
To find them ftill; like Murder, Theft will out.
Much I fufpect that Some there prefent are, }
Who know the truth about the whole affair;
Both what befell the Jewels and the Hare. }

“ Full well I know, my Liege, what weighty things
Muft daily occupy the minds of Kings.
It does not ftand with reafon to expect,
Each trifling matter You fhould recollect.
Then let me that moft wonderful of cures
Recall, which once my Sire performed for Yours.

“ Sick lay the King and dangerously ill;
He muft have died, but for my Father’s fkill.

Reynard the Fox.



Who say then, Sire, that neither he nor I
Have e'er done service to Your Majesty,
Not only speak the thing that is not true,
But utter a gross calumny on You.

“Forgive me, Sir, nor deem my tongue too bold.
With Your good leave that tale I will unfold.
My Sire was known, as far as Fame could reach,

To be a learned and a skilful Leech.
All diagnostics of disease he knew,
Judged by a Patient's pulse, and water too;
Could heal an injury in any part,
And aided Nature with his wondrous Art.
Emetics of all kinds he understood,
And what was cool and thinning for the blood.
With skill and safety could he breathe a vein,
And draw a tooth without the slightest pain.
You will not, Sire, remember this the least,
For You were then a Suckling at the breast.
'T was when drear Winter's pall the earth o'erspread,
Sick lay Your Father and confined to bed;
So sadly weak that he could not stir out;
They were obliged to carry him about.
All who could medicine were bade to come,
From ev'ry spot between this Court and Rome.
Not One of them encouraged any hope;
But All, without exception, gave him up.
Then my poor Father they called in at last,
Though not till ev'ry chance of cure seemed past.
He felt the Monarch's pulse, and shook his head;
' May the King live for ever!' then he said;
' Though much I fear he hath not long to live:
' To save his life, mine own I'd gladly give.
' The contents of yon vase let me inspect,
' To see what mischief I may there detect.'
' Do as he bids;' the King said to the Nurse;
' Do what you will; I'm getting worse and worse.'
" Upon the Mirror's rim was fair engraved
The mode in which Your Sire by mine was saved.
The contents of the vessel they had brought
My Sire examined, with reflective thought;
Then said; ' To save Your health is but one way;

' And that will not admit the least delay :
 ' Your life is gone, unless, within the hour,
 ' The liver of a Wolf you shall devour ;
 ' He must too, at the least, be sev'n years old ;
 ' And you must eat it, Sire, ere it be cold.
 ' All scruples on the point must be withstood ;
 ' The water here is thick and red as blood.'
 It chanced the Wolf was standing near the bed,
 And with disgust heard all my Father said.
 To him with feeble voice the Monarch spake ;
 ' You hear, Sir Wolf, the physic I must take.
 ' Quick, then, about it ! to effect my cure,
 ' You will not grudge your liver, I am sure.'
 ' Of no use mine would be ;' the Wolf replied,
 ' I am but five years old next Lammas-tide.'
 ' Nonsense !' my Father cried ; ' we soon shall see ;
 ' For we must lay you open instantly.'
 Off to the kitchen then the Wolf was brought ;
 And out they cut his liver, quick as thought.
 'Twas dished up smoking on a silver plate,
 And by Your Royal Father eaten straight.
 From that same hour he was quite cured and well ;
 Restored to health as by a miracle.
 What gratitude the King, Your Father, shewed ;
 The style of Doctor He on mine bestowed :
 At Court none dared this title to neglect,
 Or treat him with the slightest disrespect.
 Before th' assembled Peers he wore a cap
 Of crimson velvet, with a golden snap ;
 His place was ever at the King's right hand,
 And honored was by All throughout the land.
 " Of his poor Son how diff'rent is the lot !
 The Father's virtues now are all forgot.
 The greediest Rogues are now advanced to pow'r,

Who only seek for what they may devour.
Int'rest and Gain are thought of now alone,
And Right and Justice but by name are known.
Great Lords are those, who Servants were before,
And without mercy grind the suffering Poor:
Blindly they strike their former Mates among,
Nor heed the least the ranks from whence they sprung.
Their own advantage their sole end and aim,
They still contrive to win, whatever the game.
'Tis such as these that on the Wealthy fix,
Their flattery choking All on whom it sticks:
No man's petition will they ever heed,
If not by costly gifts accompanied:
By rapine and extortion still they live,
And, like the Horse-leech, ever cry, 'Give! give!'

"Such greedy Wolves as these, the choice tit-bits
Would always keep, as their own perquisites:
When a prompt sacrifice their King might save,
Time for reflection they will ever crave.
You see how, in this case, the Wolf preferred
To save his liver, rather than his Lord;
And what a liver too! The selfish Brute!
For I without reserve will speak my thought.
In ought that danger to the King involves,
What signifies the death of twenty Wolves?
Nay, without loss, the whole Tribe might be slain,
So but the King and Queen their lives retain.
None seek pure water from a puddled source,
Or from a Sow's ear make a filken purse.
No doubt, Sire, You the whole affair forget;
For You were much too young to notice it:
I'm sure though of the truth of what I say,
As though it happened only yesterday.

"'Graved on the Mirror all this story stood;

For 'twas my Father's special wish it should.
 Fair was the work and beauteous to behold,
 Adorned with jewels, and inlaid with gold.
 Oh! for the chance to get that Mirror back,
 Fortune and life how gladly would I stake!"

"Reynard!" said Noble, "I your speech have heard,
 And all your tales and fables, ev'ry word.
 Your Father may have been both good and great,
 And haply did vast service to the state:—
 It must have happened a long time ago;
 I never heard one word of it till now.
 But of your evil deeds I learn each day;
 Your sport is death; so all My People say.
 If these are but old tales, as you declare,
 Strange that no good of you e'er meets mine ear."

"Sire!" said the Fox, "allow me to explain.
 What you have said has caused Me deepest pain.
 To you no good I e'er have done, You state;—
 But not a word will I retaliate:
 Forbid it, Heaven! for full well, I know,
 To You the service of my life I owe.

"Permit me one adventure to repeat,
 Which I am certain You will not forget.
 If'grim and I once chanced a Boar to hunt;
 We caught him soon; good Saints! how he did grunt!
 You came, and much of hunger You complain'd,
 And said Your Spouse was following close behind:—
 If we would Each give up a little bit,
 We should on Both confer a benefit;
 A portion of our booty we might spare;
 And If'grim answered, 'Yes;'—with such an air;
 While all the while between his teeth he muttered,
 So that one could not hear a word he uttered.
 Said I, 'Sire! have Your wish! I but deplore

‘ Instead of one Swine we have not a score.
Say, Which of us the booty shall divide?
‘ The Wolf !’ You then with dignity replied.
Well pleased was If’grim, and with shameless front,
’Gan to divide, according to his wont.
One quarter, Sire, he placed aside for You;
Another, to Your Royal Spouse as due;
The other half he claimed as his own share,
And greedily began the flesh to tear;
My humble part, beside the ears and snout,
Was half the lungs, and that was all I got;
And all the rest he kept himself; to us
In sooth he was not over-generous.
Your portion soon was gone; but I perceived
Your appetite was by no means relieved.
Ifegrim though, just like a greedy beast,
Pretended not to see it in the least;
Continuing still to gnaw and champ and chew,
Nor offered, Sire, the smallest bit to You.
But then Your Royal paws did You uprear,
And smite him heavily behind the ear;
It tore his skin, and swift away he fled,
Howling like mad, with bald and bleeding head.
‘ Thou blund’ring Glutton !” after him You cried,
‘ I’ll teach thee how thy booty to divide:
‘ Hence! quick! go fetch us something more to eat!’
Then I said, Sire,—You should not want for meat;
I’d follow quickly upon If’grim’s track,
And I’d be bound, we’d soon bring something back.
And You were pleased to say, You were content;
So after Ifegrim with speed I went.
He shewed his wound, and grumbled bitterly;
But I persuaded him to hunt with me.
We fell in with a Calf, which we pursued,

And caught him ; 't was, I knew, Your fav'rite food ;
 We brought and laid it at Your Royal feet ;
 It was an off'ring for a Monarch meet ;
 You saw 't was fat, and to reward our toil,
 With gracious condescension deigned to smile ;
 And many a kindly word to me You spoke,
 And said my hunting always brought good luck ;
 Adding, ' Now, Reynard, *you* divide the Calf.'
 I answered, ' Sire, to You belongs one half ;
 ' That, with Your leave, I place aside for You ;
 ' The other to Your Royal Spouse is due ;
 ' The entrails, such as liver, heart, and lungs,
 ' All this to your dear Children, Sire, belongs :
 ' I'll take the feet, for those I love to gnaw ;
 ' And with the head the Wolf may cram his maw.'
 Then, did You thus address me ; ' Where, I pray,
 ' Learnt you to carve in such a courtly way ?'
 ' Yonder my Teacher stands, my Liege ;' I said ;
 ' The Greedy Wolf, with bald and bleeding head.
 ' Had I not learnt, it were indeed a shame ;
 ' For, Swine or Calf, the principle's the same.'

" Thus pain and sorrow did the Wolf befall ;
 And sure his greediness deserved it all.
 Alas ! there are too many of the kind ;
 To sacrifice all else to Self inclin'd.
 Their constant thoughts all bent in one direction,
 They grind their Vassals, calling it ' Protection.'
 The Poor perchance are starved, but what care they ?
 Ah ! wretched is the land that owns their sway !
 Far otherwise, mine honored Liege, You see,
 That You have always been esteemed by me ;
 All that I ever either reap or glean
 I dedicate to You and to my Queen.
 Whate'er I chance to gain, or great or small,

You surely have the largest share of all.
Think of this story of the Calf and Swine;
Then judge to whom reward You should assign.
But ah! poor Reynard's merits have grown dim;
All favors now are heaped on Isgrim!
All must submit perforce to his commands;
All tribute pass through his tenacious hands.
But little for Your int'rest doth he care,
Not e'en content with half for his own share.
You heed alone what he and Bruin say,
While Reynard's wisest words are thrown away.

"But now I am accused and shall not budge;
I know I stand before an upright Judge.
Let who so will, bring forth what charge he please,
Let him bring forward too his Witnesses;
And pledge, upon the issue of the strife,
As I will do, his wealth, his ears, his life.
Such were the law and practice heretofore;
To these I now appeal, and ask no more."

"Happen what may," then said the King, "by me
The path of Justice shall not straitened be.
Though thou art tainted, by Suspicion's breath,
To have a hand in gentle Puss's death—
My trusty Messenger! I loved him well;
And mourned his loss, far more than tongue can tell!
How did I grieve when I the Beaver saw
That bleeding head from out thy wallet draw!
His crime the Ram atoned for on the spot;
But thou hast leave to fight the matter out.—

"We pardon Reynard's treasons 'gainst the Crown,
For many services which he hath done.
If Any aught against him have to say,
Let him stand forth and prove it as he may;
Or by sworn Witnesses, or else by fight;

For here stands Reynard to defend his Right."

Then thus the Fox replied; "My gracious Lord!
My humblest thanks are all I can afford.
To ev'ry one You freely lend an ear;
And e'en the Meanest meet with Justice here.
Heav'n is my witness, with how sad a heart
I suffered Pufs and Bellyn to depart;
Some strange foreboding of their fate had I;
For, oh! I loved them both right tenderly."

Thus cunningly did Reynard play his game;
Thus artfully his endless fables frame.
Another triumph thus his wit achieved,
For he again by all was quite believed.
He spake with so much earnestness, in sooth,
It was scarce possible to doubt his truth.
Some with him even for his loss condoled;
And thus once more his Sov'reign he cajoled;
The story of the trinkets pleased the King;
He longed to have them, 'specially the Ring;
He said to Reynard, "Go, in peace of mind,
Go, and seek, far and near, the Lost to find.
Do all you can; more will I not require;
My aid you may obtain, when you desire."

"Thanks, Sire;" said Reynard, "for this act of Grace;
Now, in my heart, Despair to Hope gives place.
To punish Crime, and Falsehood to refute,
This is, my Liege, Your noblest Attribute.
Though Darkness still the whole affair enshrouds,
Ere long shall Light dispel the murky clouds.
The quest forthwith, Sire, will I expedite,
Incessantly will travel, day and night;
And when I find the Treasures which I seek,
If to retake them I should prove too weak,
Then will I venture that kind aid to pray,
Which You have offered graciously this day.

Ah! let me at Your feet but lay them down,
Repaid shall be my toil; my loyal truth made known."

The Monarch seemed well pleased to be deceived,
And all the Court as readily believed;
So cleverly the Fox his falsehoods wove,
That what he only said, he seemed to prove.
And Reynard's mind was wonderfully eased,
For he was free to wander where he pleased.

But If'grim could his wrath no more restrain;
He gnashed his teeth, and thus began complain;
" My Liege, and can you once more yield belief
To this thrice damned Perjurer and Thief?
Perceive you not, Sire, that in boasting thus,
He but deludeth You and beardeth us?
Truth doth he from his very soul despise;
And all his wit is spent in feigning lies.
But I'll not let him off so lightly now;
What a false Knave he is I soon shall shew;
Him of three grievous crimes I now indict;
And 'scape he shall not, even should we fight.
He talks of calling Witneses forsooth;—
As though that were the way to get the Truth!
They might stand here and witness all the day;
He'd manage to explain their words away;
And there might be no Witneses at times;
Should therefore all unpunished be his crimes?
But who will dare the Culprit to accuse,
When he is sure his time and suit to lose;
And from that time for ever, wrong or right,
Be a marked object for the Ruffian's spite?
E'en You Yourself, Sire, by experience know,
As well as we, what mischief he can do.
To-day I have him safe; he cannot flee;
So let him look to 't; he shall answer me!"



CHAPTER THE ELEVENTH.

The Defiance.

THUS Ifegrim, the Wolf, commenced his plaint;
Though words would fail his mighty rage to paint;
“My Liege, this Reynard is a Scoundrel still,
He ever has been one, and ever will.
And there he stands, and dares my wrath defy,
Sland’ring myself and all my Family.
My black Beast has he ever been, through life!
What endless Evils has he wrought my wife!
He once contrived the poor Thing to persuade
Into a mill-pond through a bog to wade.
He promised she should gratify her wish,
And catch that day a multitude of Fish;
She’d but to slip her tail into the pond,
And leave it hanging close upon the ground;
Fast would the Fishes fix; she’d soon take more
Than Three besides herself could well devour.

Partly she waded on, and partly swam,
Till to the sluice she got beneath the dam :
There, where the waters stood most still and deep,
Should she her tail drop down, and quiet keep.
Tow'rs ev'ning-tide there came a nipping breeze,
And bitterly did it begin to freeze ;
She had not borne it long ; but, in a trice,
Her tail was fairly frozen in the ice.
She thought 'twas owing to the Fishes' weight
She could not move it, and that all was right.
Reynard perceived her case,—the Reprobate !—
And then—but what he did I dare not state—
He shall not now escape me, by mine oath !
That outrage costs the life of One or Both !
Prate as he will, he'll not impose on me ;
Nor shall his lying tongue now set him free !
I caught him in the very act, I say—
It was the merest chance I passed that way—
I heard her cry, the poor deluded One !
Fast was she fixed there, and defence had none.
I came, and with my own eyes saw a sight—
Oh Heav'ns ! why did my heart not break outright ?
'Reynard ! what art thou doing there ?' I cried ;
He heard me, and away the Coward hied.
I hastened to the spot in grief and wrath,
Slipping and slith'ring on the glassy path.
Ne'er had I greater trouble in my life,
Than then, to break the ice and free my Wife.
But my best efforts did not quite avail ;
She was obliged, poor Soul ! to tug and hale ;
And left behind a fourth part of her tail. }
Loudly she howled, and long ; some Peasants near
Her cries of bitter anguish chanced to hear.

They hurried thither, and soon spied us out,
 And to each other 'gan to bawl and shout;
 Across the narrow dam in haste they swarmed,
 With spades and mattocks, pikes and axes armed;
 The Womankind with spindles; how they screamed
 and stormed!

'Catch them and kill them! curse them!' One and All
 Thus to each other did they loudly call.
 Such deep alarm I never felt before,
 Nor my poor Gieremund, till that sad hour.
 We saved our lives, though with the greatest pain,
 And had to run till our hides smoked again.
 There was one Fellow,—curse on his Soul!
 Armed with a long and iron-headed pole,
 Who, light of foot, kept foll'wing in our track,
 For ever poking at my sides and back.
 Had not the night approached with friendly gloom,
 We from that spot alive had never come.
 And what a hubbub did the Women keep!
 Swearing, the Hags! we had devoured their Sheep.
 As they were armed with neither pikes nor prongs,
 They tried to wound us with their spiteful tongues.
 We tow'rds the water took our course again,
 And crept among the sedges in the fen.
 The Hinds dared not in this pursuit embark,
 For luckily it now had grown pitch dark;
 So they returned, sore disappointed, home;
 And thus we just escaped our threatened doom.

"You see, my Liege, how grave was this offence;
 A mesh of treachery and violence.
 Such crimes Your love of justice must condemn;
 For None are safe unless You punish them."

The King heard this complaint with patient ear;
 Then said, "Be sure you shall have justice here;

Her rights are ever sacred, come what may :
But We will hear what Reynard has to say."

The Fox replied; "If true this tale were found,
Much to my credit would it not redound;
The charge is grave; but gracious Heav'n forbid,
I e'er should act as If'grim says I did.
All I have done was at his Wife's own wish :
I don't deny I taught her to take Fish ;
I told her where they would abound, and shew'd
How she might get there by the nearest road.
But soon as ever of the Fish I spoke,
With greedy haste, away from me she broke ;
Without reflection hurried to the spot,
And all my rules and cautions quite forgot.
Then if she happened to get frozen in,
From sitting there so long it must have been ;
Had she but pulled her tail more quickly out,
She'd have got Fish enough, I make no doubt.
But Gluttony, a vice to be abhorr'd,
Like Virtue, often brings its own reward.
The heart that never will be satisfied
Must needs oft prove a drear and aching void.
Who so the Spirit hath of Greediness
Will lead a life of trouble and distress ;
Him nothing satisfies: this, Gieremund,
When frozen in, by sad experience found.

"And thus it is my trouble is repaid!
Thus am I thanked for all my honest aid!
I shov'd and strove my best to set her free ;
But much too heavy for my strength was she.
While in this charitable act engaged,
Came Ifegrim, and furiously he raged ;
He had, it seems, been prowling round the shore ;
And there he stood, and fiercely curst and swore ;

I never heard such rude and savage tones;
They made my flesh quite creep upon my bones;
Once, twice, and thrice at my poor head he hurl'd
The wildest execrations in the world.

Thinks I then to myself, 'It seems to me
'My safest course at once to fly will be;
'For it were better sure to run away
'Than to this jealous Madman fall a prey.'
And well it was I fled, or, by my faith!
Beyond a doubt I had been torn to death.
When two Dogs fight together o'er a bone,
The victory can but remain to one.

I thought it therefore far the safer course
To flee his anger and his brutal force.
For that he is a Brute he can't deny;
Ask his own Wife; she knows as well as I;
Ask her, and she no doubt will answer true.
With him, the Liar! what have I to do?

"When he perceived his Wife in such a plight,
No doubt he went to help her; well he might.
If by the peasant Rabble they were press'd,
I guess it happened really for the best;
It cannot but have done the She-Wolf good,
Have stirred her sinews, and have thawed her blood.
'Tis truly infamous, upon my life,
To hear him now so scandalize his Wife.
But ask herself; think ye, if truth he spoke,
She would not vengeance on my head invoke.

"Meanwhile a week's imparlance will I crave,
Means to consult my Friends that I may have;
And see what answer it were best to frame,
To meet the Wolf's absurd and groundless claim."

"Nothing but Rogu'ry," answered Gieremund,
"In all you say and do is ever found;

Tricks, treasons, treach'ry, stratagems, and lies,—
Falsehood, in short, in ev'ry shape and guise.
Who trusts your glozing and deceitful tongue,
For his credulity will suffer long.
This no one better than myself can tell;
Witness what happened lately at the well.

“Two buckets there were hanging; you in one—
Wherefore I knew not—had yourself let down;
And nohow able to get up again,
Of your position loudly did complain.
At morning to the spot I chanced repair,
And asked you what you could be doing there;
You answered, ‘Cousin dear, come down here too;
‘There’s no good luck I would not share with you.
‘Get in the bucket and descend with speed;
‘Of Fish I promise you a glorious feed.’

“It was some Demon led me, sure, that way,
And made me credit what you pleased to say;
I to your oaths should ne’er have trusted more;
Well do I recollect what oaths you swore:
Not only that of Fish you’d had your fill,
But you had even ate till you were ill.
My sympathy my judgment over-ruled;—
As if that I was to let myself be fooled!

“Into the bucket did I thoughtless get;
And down it went; the other mounting straight;
And we about midway together met. }
Astonished and alarmed, I called to you;
‘In Heaven’s name, where am I going to?’
‘Here we go up and down!’ you answered thus;
‘So goes it in the world, and so with us.
‘Nor let it be a subject of surprise;
‘By our own merits we must fall or rise.’
Safe mounted, on the edge you lightly stepp’d

Out of your bucket, and away you leapt;
 While at the bottom of the well I lay,
 In sad distress of mind, the livelong day,
 And suffered endless blows before I got away.

“Some Boors came to the well at eventide,
 Nor was it long before poor Me they spied;
 Piteous indeed was my unhappy state,
 As, cold and wet and hungry, there I fate.
 Then to each other said the Boors; ‘Hallo!
 ‘See! in yon bucket sits our ancient Foe!
 ‘The Thief, from whom we nothing safe can keep;
 ‘Who eats our Kidlings and devours our Sheep!’
 ‘Just pull him up!’ said One; ‘I’ll wait for him;
 ‘And he shall catch it, when he reach the brim.’
 ‘He for our Sheep shall pay!’ another said:—
 I think the debts of all my Tribe I paid.
 Blows upon blows fell on me, thick and fast;
 A sadder hour than that I never past;
 I deemed each moment must have been my last.”

Then Reynard answered; “If you but reflect,
 Those blows, you’ll own, had all a good effect.
 For mine own part, I honestly admit
 They’d not have suited with my taste a bit;
 And as the matter stood, you see quite well,
 For both to ’scape had not been possible.
 To censure me is anything but just:
 In such a case you’ll ne’er Another trust:
 A lesson for the future let it be;—
 The world you know is full of roguery.”

“Now,” said the Wolf, “what need of further
 proof?

From this vile Traitor have I borne enough.
 Of yet another outrage I complain;
 The marks whereof I even still retain.

Through him I got into the worst of scrapes,
In Saxony among a brood of Apes.
Induced by him I went into the lair;
He knew what mischief I should meet with there.
Had I not fled with timely haste away,
Both eyes and ears I should have lost that day.
But with his lying tongue he told me first—
Ah! be that lying tongue for ever curst!—
That I should find his Lady Aunt within;
Dame Ruckenaw I fancied he must mean.
Of me he wished, I doubt not, to be rid,
And grieved I got away, e'en as I did.
He sent me down, the sly and juggling Elf!
Into that horrid nest;—I thought 'twas Hell itself."

Reynard replied before th' assembled Lords,
Malicious meaning lurking in his words;
' ' To pity Ifegrim I'm half inclin'd;
I doubt if he is in his perfect mind.
If this adventure he desire to tell,
To state it truly would be just as well.

" About three years ago, to Saxony,
With a vast store of booty, travelled he;
I followed; so far truth I recognise
In what he states; the rest's a pack of lies.
And those whose cruelty he now bemoans,
They were not Apes at all, but just Baboons.
With them no kinship have I ever claimed;
Of such alliance I should feel ashamed.
Martin the Ape, and Ruckenaw his Spouse,
They are my Kin, as Ev'rybody knows;
I honor him as Uncle, her as Aunt;
Of their affinity I well may vaunt:
He is a Notary, well versed in law,
Can sign his name, and protests deftly draw.

In what of those vile Creatures If'grim spoke,
 Your scorn at my expense he would provoke.
 Relationship with them I quite repel;
 For they are like the very Fiends of Hell.
 If I then called the old Hag 'Aunt,' 't was done
 For prudent reasons to myself best known:
 I nothing lost thereby, I fairly own. }
 Her honored Guest, I sumptuously fared;
 Or else she might have choked, for aught I cared.

"You see, my Lords, Sir Ifegrim and I
 Left the high-road and passed a mountain by.
 A cavern in the rear we chanced to mark,
 Deep it appeared, and long, and wondrous dark.
 My Friend complained, as usual, of a sinking;—
 He's got a Wolf inside him, to my thinking;
 For let him eat as much as e'er he will,
 Who ever heard him own he'd had his fill?—
 I said to him; 'The Inmates of this cave
 'Will certainly good store of victuals have;
 'I make no doubt they'll let us have a share;
 'Most seasonable is our coming here.'
 But Ifegrim replied, 'Go in and see;
 'I'll wait for you meanwhile beneath this tree.
 'Your social talents no one can deny;
 'You make Acquaintance easier far than I.
 'Go in, good Coz; I'm sure you'll be so good
 'To call me, if you meet with any food.'
 He wanted me to face the danger first;
 It being more, the Daftard! than he durst.

"I entered; nor without a shudd'ring dread
 Did I the long and sinuous passage thread;
 And what I saw—oh! not for worlds of gold,
 Would I again that awful sight behold!—
 A nest of ugly Monsters, great and small,

And their Dam with them, ugliest of them all.
With long black teeth bristled her frightful jaws,
Her hands and feet with long and crooked claws,
A long and hairy tail behind she bore ;
Such a grim Wretch I never saw before !
Her swart, gaunt Children had the strangest shapes,
And looked, for all the world, like goblin Apes.
She gazed upon me with an evil eye ;
' Would I were safe out of this house ! ' thought I.
Than Ifegrim she was a bigger Beast ;
Some of her Young too were as big, at least.
This horrible and hideous Brood I found
Bedded on rotten hay on the dank ground,
With filth all slobbered o'er. There oozed a smell
On ev'ry side them, as from pitch of Hell.
The honest truth to speak, for I'll not lie,
I felt small pleasure in their company ;
They were so many, and alone was I. }
With mine own bosom then I counsel fought,
How from this cursed place I might get out.
I greeted them with many a friendly word ;
Although such a deceit my soul abhorr'd ;
But thought it just as prudent to be civil ;—
E'en as I would be to the very Devil.
I called the old One, ' Aunt ; ' the young ones, ' Cousins,'
And gave them tender epithets by dozens.
' May gracious Heaven grant you lengthened days !'
Thus I began ; ' and prosper all your ways !'
' Are these your Children ? But I need not ask ;
' Their likenesses it were difficult to mask.
' I vow my very soul with joy it cheers,
' To see them look so well, the little Dears !
' So fresh and nice do you contrive to make 'em,
' Strangers might for the Royal Children take 'em.

' And grateful am I, as I ought to be,
 ' That you should thus augment our Family,
 ' And graft such worthy scions on our tree.
 ' Who has such Kinsfolk is most blest indeed;
 ' For they may aid him in the hour of need.'

}
 }
 }

As thus lip-honor forth to her I dealt,
 Far different, in truth, from what I felt,
 She, on her side, of me made much ado;
 Was very civil; called me 'Nephew,' too;
 Although the old Fool knew, as well as I,
 She bore no kinship to my Family.
 I thought, to call her 'Aunt,' was no great crime;
 Albeit with fear I sweated all the time.
 With kindest words by her was I address'd;
 ' Reynard, dear Kinsman! welcome, as my Guest!
 ' 'Tis very good of you, that I will say,
 ' To drop in on us in this friendly way.
 ' From your instructions shall my Children gain
 ' The skill how they to honor may attain.'
 Her Courtesy thus did I cheaply earn;
 A trifling sacrifice just served my turn;
 Claiming her kin, though she was so uncouth,
 And holding back some disagreeable truth.
 Most gladly would I then have gone away;
 But she entreated me that I would stay;
 ' So short a visit surely you'll not make;
 ' At least some slight refreshment you will take.'
 And saying thus, she brought me heaps of food,
 More than I might describe, all fresh and good;
 Fish, ven'ison, wild-fowl, and all sorts of game;—
 Much did I wonder whence the Deuce it came.
 Of all these to my heart's content I ate,
 And heartily enjoyed the bounteous treat.
 And even when I'd had my utmost fill,

She kept on urging me to take more still :—
For some there are so over-hospitable,
Would force their Guests eat more than they are
able.—

A joint of fine buck ven'son then brought she
A present for my Wife and Family.

I thanked her, as behoved me, for her cheer ;
She was all gracious ; called me ' Cousin dear ;'
And said, ' I hope to see you often here.' }
I promised all she asked ; indeed I would
Have promised anything, as matters stood.

“ At length I managed to get safely off,
Without an accident, and pleased enough ;
For nothing found I there, you may suppose,
Either to gratify the eyes or nose.
Through the dark gall'ries did I swiftly flee,
And hastened to the op'ning by the tree :
There on the greensward Isëgrim still lay,
Sighing and groaning in a grievous way.
' How fares it with you, Uncle mine ?' I cried ;
' Ah ! nearly dead with hunger ;' he replied.
I pitied him, and just his life to save,
The meat I brought to him I freely gave.
He ate it up with grateful gluttony ;
Though now he has forgotten all, you see.
His meal concluded, he desired to know,
Who were the Dwellers in the cave below :
' What sort of Folk are they down there ?' he
said ;
' And was your entertainment good or bad ?'
I told him just the pure and naked truth ;
The nest was vile, the Inmates most uncouth ;
In manners wild, uncourteous, and rough ;
To make amends though there was food enough :

And if he wished himself to have a share,
 He'd nought to do but enter boldly there; }
 Only he must be mindful Truth to spare.
 ' Though Falsehood is almost the worst of crimes,
 ' Truth is not to be spoken at all times.'
 This I repeated to him o'er and o'er,
 And added sev'ral sage instructions more:
 ' He who unwisely swagging about Truth,
 ' Has it for ever wobbling in his mouth,
 ' Is sure to meet with endless grief and woe,
 ' And persecution wherefoe'er he go;
 ' Others carested and prosp'rous shall he find;
 ' While he in ev'ry place will lag behind.'
 I fully warned him what he might expect,
 If he these warnings madly should neglect:
 ' He who but speaks what Others like to hear
 ' Is sure to be respected far and near.'

" These are the very words, Sire, that I spake,
 Both for his guidance, and my conscience' sake:
 But if he chose to act quite contrary
 And suffer'd for it, who to blame but he?
 His locks with age are grizzled, but 'tis plain
 One seeks for judgment under them in vain.
 Such stupid Brutes on bluntness lay a stress,
 And disregard all prudence and finesse;
 And, groping underground with mole-like eyes,
 Affect the light of Wisdom to despise.
 The sole advice I pressed on him, forsooth,
 Was not to be too spendthrift of the Truth:
 He rudely answered, ' I should think I know
 ' How to behave, at least as well as you.'
 Into the cave then did he boldly trot;
 And you shall hear what welcome there he got.
 " He finds the frightful Dam within her lair,

Like some old dotard Devil crouching there:
The young ones too! With terror and surprise,
Help! help! what hideous Beasts!' he wildly cries;
Are these your Offspring, pray? Faugh! how they
smell!

'Worse than the slime-engendered Spawn of Hell!
'Take them and drown them!—that is all they're worth;—
'Left the unclean Brood overrun the earth!
'An they were mine, I'd have them throttled straight;
'To catch young Devils they might serve as bait;
'One need but take them down to some bog's edge,
'And let them hang there, fastened to the sedge.
'Bog-apes indeed! it is a name that suits
'Their nature well, the nasty, dirty Brutes!'
The outraged Mother answered with a shriek,
For haste and anger scarce would let her speak;
'What Devil sent this bouncing Knave to us?
'In my own house to be insulted thus!
'The vulgar Ruffian! My poor Children too!
'Ugly or handsome, what is that to you?
'Reynard the Fox, with fifty times your sense,
'A man of knowledge and experience,
'Has only just now left us; he avow'd
'My Young were handsome, and their manners good;
'Nay e'en to call them Cousins he was proud.
'A short time back, and in this very place,
'All this he stated frankly to my face.
'If you they do not please, as they did him,
'Remember you came here of your own whim;
'Nobody asked you, Gaffer Isgrim!'
But he demanded food of her, and said;
'Bring it at once, or I your search may aid;
'I cannot stand your vanity to please.'—
With that he strove upon her store to seize.

Nor prudent was the thought, or wife the deed ;
 But little did he all my cautions heed.
 Upon him, quick as thought, herself she threw,
 And bit and scratched him, that the blood she drew.
 Her children too were all as bad as she,
 And tore and clawed and mauled him fearfully.
 He did not dare return their blows again ;
 But howled and screamed in agony of pain.
 He fought,—the only chance his life to save—
 With hasty steps, the op'ning of the cave.

“I saw him come, with mangled cheeks and lips,
 His torn hide hanging down in gory strips ;
 One ear was split and bloody was his nose ;
 He looked, in short, one wound from head to toes.
 I asked, for his condition moved my ruth,
 ‘ You surely have not gone and spoke the Truth ? ’
 But he replied ; ‘ I said just what I thought.—
 ‘ Oh ! to what sad disgrace have I been brought !
 ‘ The ugly Witch ! Ah, would I had her here !
 ‘ I’d make her pay for my dishonor, dear !
 ‘ What think you, Reynard ? Have you ever seen
 ‘ So vile a Brood ; so nasty and obscene ?
 ‘ I told her so, and surely I did right ;
 ‘ But straight I lost all favor in her sight.
 ‘ I came but badly off, upon my soul !
 ‘ Would I had never seen the cursed hole ! ’
 Then answered I, ‘ You must be mad, I swear ;
 ‘ How widely diff’rent my instructions were ;
 ‘ ‘ Your Servant, dearest Aunt, ’ you should have said,—
 ‘ It never injures one to seem well-bred ;—
 ‘ ‘ The world, I hope, goes ever well with you,
 ‘ ‘ And your sweet darling little Children too.
 ‘ ‘ The joy I feel is more than I can tell
 ‘ ‘ To see you looking all so nice and well. ’ ”—

But Ifegrim impatiently broke in ;
' What ! call that Bitch my Aunt ! those Cubs my Kin !
' The Devil may make off with all the Fry ;
' He their relationship may claim, not I !



' Faugh ! but they are a foul and filthy race !
' Ne'er again may I meet them face to face !'
" Such were his actions, such was his reward ;
Judge then if I betrayed him, good my Lord.
He can't deny that what I've said is true ;
At least 'twill not much help him if he do."

Then Ifegrim replied with wrathful tongue,
His breast with sense of deep injustice wrung;
“What boots this idle war of angry words?
Can we decide our feud with woman’s swords?
Right still is Right, whate’er the Bad pretend!
And he who hath it, keeps it to the end.
Reynard now bears himself as vauntingly
As though the Right were his; but we shall see.

“With me you shall do battle; thus alone
On which side truth is marshalled shall be known.
A pretty tale forsooth is this you tell
Of our adventure at the She-ape’s cell;
That I was starving and was fed by you!
But in what manner gladly would I know:
For what you brought me was just nought but bone;
You best yourself know where the flesh was gone.
And there you boldly stand, and flout and jeer—
By Heav’n! but this doth touch mine honor near!
Suspicious vile your false and slanderous tongue
On my good name and loyalty hath flung;
That I, devoid of ’legiance and faith,
Had compassed and imagined my King’s death:
While you to Him with idle fables prate
Of stores and treasures, at a shameful rate.
Treasures and stores, forsooth! to my poor mind,
Such wonders will be somewhat hard to find.
But what doth most my vengeful wrath arouse
Is the deep shame you’ve done my dearest Spouse.

“For all these grievances, both old and new,
I will do battle to the death with you.
Here to your face do I proclaim you are
A Traitor vile, a Thief, a Murderer;
And I will make it good, life against life;
And thus, and not by chiding, end our strife.

What I avouch, I am prepared to prove;
Whereof in token here I fling my glove;
Thus formally the battel do I wage;
Stoop then if you have heart, and lift my gage.
My Sov'reign Liege and all th' asssembled Lords
Have heard and know the import of my words;
They will affist this trial of the right,
As Witnesses of our judicial fight.
But you shall not escape me anyhow,
Until our feud is settled; that I vow!"

Then with himself did Reynard counsel take;
' Fortune and life are now indeed at stake :
' For big and strong is he ; I, weak and small ;
' 'Twere sad if ill mine efforts now befall ;
' Vain then were all my cunning and my skill ;
' Yet will I hope a good conclusion still.
' Of some advantage I may fairly boast ;
' Since his fore-claws he hath but lately lost :
' And, in the end, unless his passion cool,
' He may perchance be foiled, presumptuous Fool !'

Then to the Wolf he boldly thus spake out :
" I stuff the Traitor's name back down your throat !
Charge upon charge against me you devise,
But I denounce them all as groundless lies ;
You offer battel now, and haply think
That from the trial I in fear may shrink ;
But long I've wished this means my truth to prove ;
The challenge I accept ! Lo ! here my glove !"

Then Noble, King of Beasts, agreed to hold
The gages proffered by these champions bold ;
And said, " Bring forth your Sureties now as bail
That at to-morrow's fight you shall not fail,
Both sides I've heard, but understand no more—
Nay, less I may say—than I did before."

As If'grim's Sureties stood the Cat and Bear,
 Tybalt and Bruin; those for Reynard were
 Greybeard and Monkie, Martin's Son and Heir. }

To Reynard then thus spake Dame Ruckenaw;
 "Coolness and prudence now must be your law.
 My Husband, who is on his road to Rome,
 Taught me a pray'r last time he was at home;
 Good Abbot Gulpall did the same compose,
 And gave it, as a favor, to my Spouse.
 He said it was a pray'r of wond'rous might,
 A saving spell for those about to fight:
 He who, the morning, this should fasting hear,
 Nor pain nor peril all that day need fear;
 Vanquished he could not be by any Foe,
 Nor death nor wounds of any nature know.
 This pray'r o'er you to-morrow will I say;
 Then, Nephew dear, be jocund for to-day."

"Thanks, dearest Aunt," said Reynard, "for your care;
 Deeply beholden am I for your pray'r;
 But mostly do I trust, and ever will,
 The justice of my cause, and mine own skill."

All night his Friends remained with him, and fought
 With cheerful chat to scare each gloomy thought.
 Dame Ruckenaw, more thoughtful than the rest,
 Was ever busied how to serve him best.
 From head to tail she had him closely sheared,
 And then with fat and oil his body smeared;
 He stood all smooth and sleek from top to toe,
 That he no grip should offer to his Foe.

Then thus she spake; "We must be circumspect,
 And on all chances of the fight reflect.
 Harken to my advice; a Friend in need,
 Who gives good counsel, is a Friend indeed.
 To-night, whate'er you do, before you sleep,



Of light Liebfrauenmilch drink pottle-deep :
To-morrow, when you enter in the lifts—
Attend me well, herein the point consits—
Wet well your brush—I need not tell you how—
Then fly upon your unsuspecting Foe ;
Lash at his face, and salve him right i' th' eye ;
His smarting fight will darken instantly :
This cannot fail to cause him sore distress,

And in the combat profit you no less.
 Next must you take to flight, as though in fear;
 He will be sure to follow in your rear;
 You will take heed to run against the wind,
 While your swift feet kick up the dust behind;
 So shall his lids be closed with sand and dirt;
 Then on one side spring sudden and alert;
 And while he stops his smarting eyes to wipe,
 Upon them deal another stinging stripe;
 Thus, blinded, at your mercy shall he be,
 And yours the undisputed victory.

“ Yourself to rest now, dearest Nephew, lay;
 We will be sure to wake you when ’tis day.
 But first, as now the midnight hour is past,
 Ere yet you slumber, and while still you fast,
 Your heart to strengthen, should it chance be weak,
 Those sacred words of power I’ll o’er you speak.”

Then both her hands she placed upon his head,
 And with a solemn voice these words she said;
‘Tiw rof tfo jessap hſir’bbig gnidnuos-hgih!’
 Now ev’ry adverse charm you may defy.”

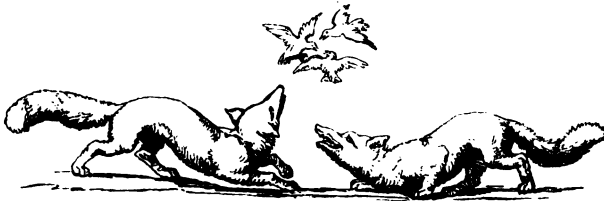
They laid him then to rest beneath a tree;
 And there he slept both long and tranquilly.

Soon as the morning o’er the hill-tops brake,
 The Beaver came his Kinsman to awake;
 With him the Otter; greeting kind they gave;
 Bade him arise, and bear him bold and brave;
 And laughing said, he had no need to shave. }

The Otter brought with him a nice young duck,
 And handing it to Reynard, thus he spoke;
 “ For this I’ve toiled, while you were fast asleep;
 And it hath cost me many a parlous leap;
 I caught it at the mill near Huenerbrod;
 Eat it, dear Coz; and may it do you good!”

“Gra’merry for the handsel!” Reynard said,
With cheerful heart as out he skipped from bed;
“So choice a present I would never slight;
I pray that Heav’n your kindness may requite.”

He ate and drank unto his heart’s content;
Then to the lifts with all his Friends he went;
Down to a sandy level near a field,
Where the appointed combat should be held.





CHAPTER THE TWELFTH.

The Battel.

WHEN Reynard thus before the throne appeared,
Shorn of his hair, with oil and ointment smeared ;
The good King was so tickled with the sight,
He could not choose but fairly laugh outright.

“ Why, Fox, who taught thee such a trick ? ” he cried,
“ As shave thy hair away, to save thy hide !
Reynard the Fox well may they christen thee,
For all thy life is full of foxery ;
No matter how involved may be the scrape,
Thou’rt sure to find some loop-hole for escape.”

Low to the King, with reverential mien,
Bowed Reynard, and still lower to the Queen ;
Then gaily did he leap the lifts within,
Where waited Isegrim with all his Kin ;

Who prayed the Fox might find a shameful fate,
And showered upon him words of threat'ning hate.

The Lynx and Libbard, Marshals of the list,
Brought forth the holy relics in a chest ;
The while, bare-headed stood the Champions both,
The Wolf and Fox, and took the wonted oath.

With many angry words and scowling looks,
First Isgrim the Wolf swore 'gainst the Fox :
He was a Traitor, Murderer and Thief ;
Guilty of ev'ry kind of crime, in brief ;
False unto him and outraging his Wife ;
This he would prove against him, life for life.

Then Reynard swore, upon the other side,
That Isgrim, the Wolf, most foully lied ;
A Traitor and a Perjurer was he,
While he himself from ev'ry crime was free.

The doughty Marshals then, ere they withdrew,
Bade both the Champions their devoir to do,
And truly keep the rules of lawful fight ;
And Heav'n in justice would defend the Right ;
The lists then duly cleared of ev'ry one,
They left the Champions in the midst alone.
To Reynard though Dame Ruckenaw drew near,
And, as she passed, thus whispered in his ear ;
" Remember, Nephew, the advice I gave ;
My counsel follow, and your credit save."

To her, in cheerful tones, the Fox replies ;
" My heart your kindly warning fortifies ;
My wiles have carried me through many a scrape,
Through risks of ev'ry kind and ev'ry shape ;
Nor fear I but they shall assist me now
To baffle yonder fierce and savage Foe.
Shame upon him and his I look to heap,
While all my Friends shall fame and honor reap."

Now stand the Champions in the lists alone,
While hush'd and still the anxious Crowd look on.

Wildly and savagely, with outstretched claws,
With bristling hair, and wide-distended jaws,
If'grim, the Wolf, the onset first began,
And, swift as thought, at his Opponent ran.
The wily Fox dared not the charge abide,
But, light of foot, sprang actively aside;
Nor did he now his Aunt's advice forget;
His bushy tail already had he wet;
On ev'ry side this did he whisk and flirt,
And so besmear it well with sand and dirt.
Thought If'grim, 'I surely have him now;'
But Reynard dealt him so severe a blow,
Across his eyes, with his bedaggled tail,
That the Wolf's sight and hearing 'gan to fail.

'Twas not the only time this trick he'd played;
Others this stinging ointment had essayed;
If'grim's Children he half blinded so,
As has been hinted at some time ago;
And now he hoped to blind the Father too.

Having to If'grim's eyes this salve applied;
Again the wily Reynard sprang aside;
And taking care to run against the wind,
He stirred a mighty cloud of dust behind.
This filled the Wolf's eyes, that they smarted sore;
The more he rubbed, they smarted all the more;
And worse he fared than he had done before.
Meanwhile the crafty Reynard did not fail
To ply with vigor his assiduous tail;
Lashing his Adversary left and right,
Till wholly he deprived him of his sight.
Faint he became, and dazed, and all confused:
The wary Fox quick his advantage used;

The Battel.



Seeing what tears his straining eye-balls wept,
On his unhappy Foe he fiercely leapt ;
His hide, with teeth and talons, tore and gashed,
And ever with his tail his eyes he lashed.
While If'grim, senseless, gropes about, the Fox,
With fleeing taunts, thus his Opponent mocks ;
 " Sir Wolf, bethink you well that in your time
You have committed many a heinous crime :

How many a Lamb and other harmless Beast
 Your maw have furnished with a guilty feast;
 While I have borne the scandal and the blame,
 And your bad deeds have fullied my good name;
 But your iniquities henceforth shall cease;
 And the poor Innocents may rest in peace.
 A boon as gainful 'tis to you, as them,
 Your further guilty progress now to stem;
 Your only chance is this your soul to save;
 Yet if my pardon you will humbly crave,
 And freely own that vanquished now you are,
 I will have mercy, and your life will spare."

He said; and griping hard his Foeman's throat,
 Again his bleeding cheeks he fiercely smote.
 But If'grim's strength no longer idle lay;
 He gave two vig'rous twists, and tore away.
 But Reynard at his face once more lets fly,
 And sharply striking him, tears out an eye:
 A deep and ghastly wound! the smoking blood
 Adown his cheek in crimson current flow'd.
 "See!" quoth the taunting Fox; "he hath it now;
 Avenged am I, and vanquished is my foe!"
 But mad with pain and heedless of his wound,
 The savage Wolf, with one tremendous bound,
 On Reynard sprang, and bore him to the ground: }

His saucy courage now began to quail,
 His tricks and cunning nothing might avail;
 With sudden snap, one of his foremost paws
 The Wolf has seized fast in his griping jaws:
 And Reynard lay half dead with fear and pain,
 While thousand thoughts swarmed darting through his brain;
 Then Ifegrim with hot and clammy breath,
 And hollow voice, thus muttered 'tween his teeth;
 "Thine hour is come! surrender on the spot!"

Or death, upon the instant, is thy lot.
Thine hour is come! it little shall avail
To scratch the dust up, or bewet thy tail;
To shave thy hair; to smear thyself with grease;
Woe on thee, Miscreant! thou'lt run out thy lease!
Thou'lt wrought me countless ills; told many a lie; }
Wounded me sorely, and tore out mine eye; }
But now, escape thou shalt not; yield or die!" }

Thought Reynard then; 'This is an evil hour!
What shall I do on earth t'avoid his pow'r?
Me, if I yield not, will this Savage slay;
If I do yield, disgraced am I for aye.
I've earned his hate, for I've abused him still,
With wrong and insult, to my utmost skill.'

Then, with sweet words and accents soft and smooth,
He strove his fierce Opponent's wrath to soothe;
"Hear me, good Uncle! I with joy will be
Your Vassal, I and all my Family;
A pilgrimage with pleasure, for your sake,
Unto the Holy Sepulchre I'll make;
I'll visit ev'ry church upon my track,
And endless absolutions bring you back;
Your soul to benefit these cannot fail;
Your blessed parents too they may avail;
Though they may now be in a better place;
Who is there does not need a saving Grace?
I'll honour you, as though the Pope you were;
The deepest and most solemn oaths will swear,
That I myself and all my Relatives
Shall do you homage for our goods and lives;
And suit and service will we yield to you,
More than to our liege King we even do.

"Take then my offer, Uncle, while you may;
And all the land shall quickly own your sway:

All that I catch myself, to you I'll bring;
Fish, Fowls, Ducks, Geese and Pigeons—everything!
Yourself, your Wife and Children, of all pelf
Shall have first choice, ere I will taste myself.
Your safety will I watch with anxious eye,
That harm or danger ne'er approach you nigh.
They call me cunning, powerful are you;
Together what great things may we not do!
What a confed'racy were this of ours!
Wisdom and Strength! who could withstand such pow'rs!
To join together *thus* though, but to fight—
That, dearest Uncle, never can be right!
This combat I had done my best to shun,
If but it might with honor have been done.
But, as the public challenge came from you,
What, in the name of honor, could I do?
My courtesy I've carried such a length,
I've not put forth one quarter of my strength:
For to myself I said, 'Now, have a care;
'It is but right you should your Uncle spare.'
Had I but given way to hate or spleen,
How different the issue might have been!
You have not suffered much; if your poor eye
Have met with an untoward injury,
It happened by the purest accident,
For which, with all my soul, do I lament.
I know a simple and a certain cure,
In which you shall participate, be sure:
Or if the hurt be greater than my skill,
You'll have one comforting advantage still:
If you at any time would fain repose,
Only one window will you have to close;
While we, unless we always keep awake,
A double trouble have to undertake.

“Bethink you then, dear Uncle; all my Kin
Shall kneel before your feet, my grace to win:
Here, in full Court, my Children and my Wife
From you shall pray my pardon and my life.
Here will I even publicly declare,
The crimes, I charged you with, but flanders were;
That I have grosly lied; nay, I will vow,
That nought against your character I know;
That, for all future time, I never will
Or breathe or think against you aught of Ill.

“This freely will I do to soothe your ire:
What expiation can you more desire?
Kill me; and where will be the lightest good?
My Friends and Kindred will keep up the feud.
Spare me; and think how in renown you rise;
For all will deem you generous and wise.
Prove thus how truly noble is your mind;
Another chance you may not quickly find.
But do your pleasure; for you will, I see:—
To live or die is all the same to me!”

“False Fox!” replied the savage Wolf; “how fain
Thou from my grapple wouldst be loose again!
But were the world one lump of fire-tried gold,
And offered here, my vengeance to withhold,
I would not, base Diffempler, let thee go:
What value are thine oaths, full well I know.
What for thy Friends or Kindred do I care?
Their enmity methinks I well may bear.
Well might’st thou at my silly weakness scoff,
If protestations now could get thee off.
Of thy forbearance thou didst boasting speak!
How is’t mine eye hangs bleeding on my cheek?
By thine infernal claws is not my hide
In twenty places scored and scarified?”

When panting I was worn almost to death,
 What leisure didst thou grant to fetch my breath?
 Pardon and Mercy! That is not the way
 That Injury and Insult I repay!
 Me thou hast basely wronged; and my poor Wife—
 Ah! thou shalt pay the forfeit with thy life!”

Thus spake the Wolf; the crafty Fox meanwhile,
 Who saw that nothing could be gained by guile,
 Using the other hand he still had free,
 Gripped hold of his Opponent savagely;
 And in so very sensitive a part,
 The startled Wolf howled with the sick'ning smart.
 Swift then the Fox withdrew his other paw
 From the huge chasm of that portentous jaw;
 With both his Foeman hard and fast he clenched,
 And lugged and scratched and haled and nipped and wrenched,
 That Isgrim screamed out, till blood he spate,
 And brake with pain into a seething sweat.

Glad Reynard deemed his conquest now secure;
 Yet, tooth and nail, held firm, to make all sure;
 While the Wolf, spent and sprawling undermost,
 Stifled and blind, himself gave up for lost.
 The sanguine stream in copious currents flows,
 Adown his beard, from eyes and mouth and nose.
 Oh! not for heaps of wealth and boundless gold,
 The triumph of that hour had Reynard sold!
 The more his Foe grew faint and weak, the more
 He griped and pinched and bit and clawed and tore;
 I' th' dust the Wolf rolled, with dull, hollow fobs,
 Gestures unseemly and convulsive throbs.

With wailings loud his Friends the Monarch prayed
 He would command the combat might be stayed;
 The King replied; “E'en so then let it be,
 If you all wish it; 'tis all one to me.”

Then Noble bids the Marshals of the list
To cause the Champions from the fight desist.
The Lynx and Libbard quick are at their post,
And Reynard as the Conqueror thus accost;

‘ Enough! the King doth now his mandate send
The combat shall conclude, the strife shall end.
He wills you spare the life of Isgrim,
And leave the issue of the day to Him.
If either of the Twain should lose his life,
We all had reason to regret the strife.
The vict’ry, Reynard, rests with you; we own
That you right nobly your devoir have done;
And have from all golden opinions won.” }

Then Reynard said; “To all my thanks I pay;
And gladly will the King’s behests obey;
Too proud to do whatever he require:
Victor! what triumph can I more desire?
But that my cause I may not prejudice
I humbly crave to ask my Friends’ advice.”

Then Reynard’s Friends with one accord replied;
“We think it best the King were satisfied.”
And round him gathered in tumultuous flocks
The Relatives of the victorious Fox;
The Beaver and the Otter and the Ape,
With Greybeard, wished him joy of his escape.
And many greeted him as Friends, of those
Who heretofore had been his dearest Foes;
The Squirrel and the Weasel and the Stoat,
The Ermine too, and some of lesser note,
Who formerly would scarcely speak his name,
Kindred with him are now too glad to claim.
In fine, he found no end of Relatives,
Who brought with them their Children and their
Wives;

While Great and Little with each other vie,
To lavish compliments and flattery.

In the World's circle fares it ever thus;
Good wishes rain upon the Prosperous;
But the unfortunate or needy man
May e'en get through his troubles as he can.

So fares it now; and all the Courtiers strive
How honor to the Victor they may give.
Some sing; some play the flute; the hautboy, some;
Some blow the trumpet; others beat the drum;
And his now num'rous Friends in chorus cry;
"Hail! happy day of joy and victory!
Hail! conqu'ring Hero! unto whom we trace
The honor and renown of all our Race.
How did we grieve when wounded there you lay!
How glad we greet the issue of the fray!"

And Reynard answered; "Thanks, my worthy Friends;
For all I've borne your kindness makes amends:"
Then, while behind in swarming crowds they preft,
Marched onward with the Marshals of the list;
And thus with acclamations loud they bring
The Conqueror in triumph to the King.

So soon as they arrived before the throne,
The Fox with humble bearing knelt him down;
But the good Monarch motioned him to rise,
And then addressed him thus, in gracious wise;

"The day is yours by right of victory;
And from all forfeit We pronounce you free.
With all Our Barons counsel shall be ta'en,
So soon as Ifegrim is whole again:
Then will We judge the cause as best we may.
The matter is concluded for to-day."

"Your resolution, Sire;" with bow profound
Said wily Reynard, "is both wise and sound.

The Battel.



Whate'er be the opinions of the Rest,
Yours must prevail ; for ever You know best.

“How many here conspired to lay me low,
And lied, to gratify my pow'rful Foe!
When I was hardest prest by Ifegrim,

How they all clamored then—‘Down, down with him!’
All to delight the Wolf! for all could see
I stood not in Your favor high as he.
They little thought how the affair would end :—
And each of these is now my worthy Friend.

“Such Knaves are like unto a pack of Hounds,
Whom once I noted in a rich Man’s grounds ;—
For a true story, Sire, is this I tell,
Though it commenceth like a parable.—

In groups they waited round the kitchen door,
Where oft-times they had been regaled before,
In eager expectation, some stray bone
Might by the Scullion’s kindness forth be thrown.

A piece of flesh the foremost of the lot
Contrived to pilfer smoking from the pot ;
With his rich booty quick he hurried off ;
But not, unluckily, quite quick enough :
For the vexed Scullion, when the theft she spied,
Flung all the boiling water on his hide.

He kept his booty though, despite the pain,
And his expectant Comrades joined again.
They to each other cried ; ‘Why, only look !

‘How our dear Friend is favored of the Cook !’
They cringed to him and fawned in various ways,
And spoke no end of nonsense in his praise.

‘All mighty fine !’ the scalded Hound replied ;
‘But ere you judge, first hear the other side.
‘Worthy of envy you my state may find,
‘As seen in front ; but, look at me behind.’

And saying this his back to them he turned,
And shewed his rump naked as though ’twere burned.
Seeing his hairless hide all creased and shrunk,
Great fear fell on them, and away they flunk ;

They left him standing there all bare and lone;
And not one ventured back to seek a bone.

“Such is the fate, Sire, of the Covetous;
They prosper and they perish ever thus:
In pow’r they find no lack of eager Friends,
Who fawn upon them for their selfish ends;
With kind indulgence all their foibles treat,
Because their mouths are haply full of meat:
From All they look for and receive respect;
For who will dare the Prosp’rous to neglect?
Allies in Old and Young alike they find,
Until misfortune falls on them behind:
Their enviable lot then alters quick,
Their former Friends to them no longer stick;
But right and left fall off, like scalded hair,
And leave them in their sorrow, lone and bare;
Or as that fycophantic pack of Hounds
Forfook their Comrade, when they saw his wounds.

“Ah! Sire; all humble though he be, and weak,
Shall None of Reynard thus have cause to speak.
I set some value on my honest name;
My Friends through me shall never come to shame.
One only mission have I to fulfil;
To learn and execute my Sov’reign’s will.”

“What need more words?” thus did the King
reply;

“We comprehend the matter perfectly.
To you as a free Baron We restore
All privileges you e’er held before.
Henceforth at Court Our favor shall you meet,
And at Our Privy Council take your seat.
To pow’r and honor will we raise you up;
And you shall well deserve it, as we hope.
Whatever faults are charged on you, ’tis clear

Reynard the Fox.



We never can afford to miss you here.
Of all your Peers none can above you rise,
If only you prove virtuous as wife.
No fresh complaints against you will We hear,
No matter what Complainants may appear.
Nay, to evince Our confidence still more,
We now appoint you Lord High Chancellor;

And here Our Seal deliver to your hand;
That what you do or write, throughout the land,
Shall be as writ or done by Our command." }

While all th' assembled Peers to Reynard bow'd,
And wished him joy with gratulations loud;
Thus to the King he spake; "These honors, Sire,
Are more than I deserve, or dared desire.
But by my deeds I'll prove my grateful mind;
For words are, at the best, but idle wind."

How it with Ifegrim meanwhile did fare,
Shall in a few brief words be made appear.
Still in the lists he lay upon the ground,
Faint and begashed with many a ghastly wound.
His Wife and Friends all hastened to him there;
Tybalt the Cat came with the shaggy Bear;
These to his Kin and Children gave their aid;
The wounded Wolf they on a litter laid,
Well bolstered round, to keep him warm, with hay;
And bore him, moaning, from the field away.

They search his wounds, and count one score and fix;
And Leeches come and bandages affix,
And with rare unguents all his limbs anoint,
For sprained was he and lame in ev'ry joint;
And herbs they rub of pungent qualities
Into his eyes and nose, to make him sneeze.
And they consulted long, and did their best
To calm his Friends and give their Patient rest.

He slept at length, but not as they could wish;
His slumbers were disturbed and feverish;
And when he woke, 'twas with a burning brain,
Unto a mingled sense of shame and pain.
So poignant and so deep his feelings were,
He howled aloud with anguish and despair.

Reynard the Fox.



And Gieremund, his all but widowed Wife,
Watched o'er the ebb and flow of her Lord's life;
His suff'rings stirred up all her sympathies,
And with her fobs and groans she answered his;
And looking at her own and Children's doom,
She saw the future shrouded o'er with gloom;
And no bright prospects in the distance loom.

But Reynard's Friends loud songs of triumph
raise,

Till he is almost tired of his own praise.
In highest spirits then he left the Court;
The King had granted him a brave Escort;
And, when he took his leave was pleased to say;
"We trust you will not long remain away."

Then did the Fox before the Monarch kneel,
Saying; "Ah! could I speak the thanks I feel
To You, Sire, and my gracious Lady dear,
And, I may add, to everybody here!
May Heav'n eternal blessings on You shower;
Would to confer them were but in my power.

"And now with grateful, though with humble
heart,

I crave Your kind permission to depart;
And to my Wife and Children home return,
Who still with anxious tears my absence mourn."

"Depart in peace!" replied the mighty King;
"And fear not any man or any thing."

So Reynard left with all his Kin; two score
There were who with him journeyed, if not more.
All full of triumph and of joy they are,
And in their Kinsman's glory hope to share.
While he himself his transports noway veils;
But stalks as proud as though he had two tails;
To think he'd won such honor by sheer wit,
And how the bravest use to make of it.

'This realm henceforth (thus to himself thought he) }
On true Fox principles shall governed be,
By members only of my Family. }

A certain truth the world may thus behold,
How much more wisdom is of worth than gold.'

Thus he, with all his Friends, as an escort,



Reached Malepartus, his domestic fort.
He thanked them for the sympathy they'd shewn,
When he in peril's hour had stood alone;
And promised all their kindness to repay:
Then they departed, and went each his way.

His dwelling then he entered, where he found
His Wife and Children haply safe and found.
How Ermelyne rejoiced to see her Lord
To her fond arms alive and well restor'd!
And earnestly she prayed him to relate
By what good chance he 'scaped his threatened fate.

Reynard replied; "It was not chance, dear Wife,
But skill and cunning that have saved my life.
Again with Noble reconciled am I;
Ne'er in his favor have I stood so high.
He's called me to his Council, as of yore,
And in full Court has named me Chancellor;
Has given into my keeping the Great Seal;
And henceforth I shall rule the Commonweal.

"The Wolf have I in battel overcome;
In future are his lips for ever dumb;
Wounded he lies, disabled and disgraced;
My marks of vengeance on him have I placed.
Her streams of sorrow may his Wife unfluece;
Henceforth her Husband is of little use.
But nothing shall I grieve on that account;
Vanquished is he, and I, Lord Paramount.
Be of good cheer then, Love; for happy hours
The future hath in store for us and ours."

Great was the Vixen's gladness; while her Boys
Their Sire half deadened with their frantic joys.
They frisked and sprang about on ev'ry side;
"Oh, happy day! oh, joyful hour!" they cried;
"Who upon earth so fortunate as we?
For honored through our Father shall we be.
Our Enemies we now may set at nought,
And have it our own way, as Foxes ought."

Now Reynard lives in honor and in state;
Then let us all his wisdom imitate;

Eschew the Evil and select the Good :
This moral points our tale, when understood.
The truth with fables hath the Poet mixed,
That Virtue in your hearts may be infixed ;
And you who purchase and peruse this poem
May see the ways o' th' world, and learn to know 'em ;
As it has been is now, and aye will be.—
Here then ends Reynard's life and history ;
And with a bow we here lay down our pen.
The Lord preserve us evermore. Amen !



*London :—Printed by Richard Clay,
Bread Street Hill.*

